United Nations A/62/PV.80

General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

80th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 12 February 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 132 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/62/657 and Add.1)

The President: Before turning to the thematic debate, I would like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/62/657 and its addendum 1.

In document A/62/657, the Secretary-General informs the Assembly that 15 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I would like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years".

In document A/62/657/Add.1, the Secretary-General informs the Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/62/657, Vanuatu has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the information contained in those documents?

It was so decided.

Thematic debate entitled "Addressing climate change: The United Nations and the world at work"

Agenda items 48, 54 and 116 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Sustainable development

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/644)

The President: The general debate of the General Assembly in September 2007 set the stage for a comprehensive examination of climate change. Member States subsequently adopted resolution 62/8, requesting the Secretary-General to specify the actions the United Nations currently undertakes on climate change to support Member States in existing international frameworks.

On this occasion, I would like to commend the Secretary-General for quickly responding to the request of Member States for a report on the United Nations activities in relation to climate change. This should serve as a good basis for Member States to set out their viewpoints on the way forward.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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I would also like to congratulate Member States on their tremendous efforts to secure an initial agreement in Bali. There is more hard work to come, but the stage is now set to put in place a comprehensive post-Kyoto agreement. However, the combined efforts of all stakeholders are necessary to comprehensively tackle climate change effectively.

Many countries cannot wait until the effects of mitigation targets have begun to be felt. We need all targets and immediate practical actions that can help the most vulnerable adapt to climate change. What is required now is a clear strategic vision from Member States so that all parts of the United Nations system can direct their efforts to where they are most needed.

These insights have significant implications for the way the United Nations works. Leaders from across the United Nations system have asked for clear, political backing from Member States in order to be able to move forward and implement the necessary technical and managerial changes, so that the United Nations can truly deliver more than the sum of its parts, so that it can deliver as one.

The steps taken to improve coordination through the Chief Executives Board, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, are a good beginning. However, many Member States have clearly expressed their desire to support and develop this process by setting out the general principles of a policy framework for United Nations activities on climate change.

To do so, there are some pertinent questions that we should ask. First, what strategic goals should the United Nations adopt to prepare for the post-Kyoto regime in 2012? What is the financial architecture that can best channel funds to these priorities? How can we effectively mainstream climate change into the development agenda? And, finally, how can we achieve better coherence within the United Nations system?

We cannot wait for tomorrow. We need to act today. That is why I convened this meeting of the General Assembly: to give Member States the opportunity to provide the political direction that the United Nations system needs.

While we should not try to micromanage, and today is just the beginning of this process, it is nevertheless extremely important that Member States work speedily and cooperatively in order to reach agreement on the principles of a strategic policy framework to guide the climate change activities of the United Nations.

There is growing confidence, among all stakeholders, that we can deliver tangible, practical action to address climate change issues at the global level. I therefore look forward to a substantive, cooperative debate focused on results. It is up to the General Assembly to demonstrate leadership through a willingness to act for the good of all that live on this fragile planet.

Before proceeding further, I would like to draw the attention of members to some organizational matters pertaining to the conduct of the meeting. In order to accommodate everyone inscribed on the list of speakers — and there are 117 names currently inscribed on it — speakers are urged to adhere to the five-minute limit for their statements. This would not preclude the distribution of more extensive texts. I appeal to speakers to cooperate in this respect.

Also, in order to assist speakers in managing their time, a light system has been installed at the speakers' rostrum which functions as follows: a green light will be activated at the start of the speaker's statement; an orange light will be activated 30 seconds before the end of the five minutes; a red light will be activated when the five minutes have elapsed.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. John William Ashe, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda.

Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda): The Group of 77 and China thank you, Mr. President, for convening this thematic debate in the General Assembly, entitled "Addressing climate change: the United Nations and the world at work". It provides the Assembly with an additional opportunity for an exchange of views among Member States and with other partners on one of the more important issues on the development agenda of the United Nations.

At the outset, the Group of 77 and China reiterates that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is, and should remain, the primary comprehensive framework for addressing climate change. Therefore, this thematic debate should be recognized as an opportunity for Member States to dialogue on ways of increasing support for the Framework, meeting the urgent need for immediate action to fully implement commitments

under the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol and supporting the Bali Action Plan and other mechanisms of the Convention.

The Group of 77 and China is of the view that there should not be a parallel process of debates that would detract from the negotiation process under the Convention. We believe that multilateral action to address climate change should remain firmly rooted in the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol.

Furthermore, this thematic debate, and the Secretary-General's report on the overview of United Nations activities in relation to climate change, should not attempt to influence any other processes such as the system-wide coherence debate or the discussions on international environmental governance.

The Group is of the view that discussions on climate change should be placed within the proper context of sustainable development. It is imperative that our discussion reinforce the promotion of sustainable development, highlighting the three pillars — economic development, social development and environmental protection — and the need to promote all three in an integrated, coordinated and balanced manner.

We must not lose sight of the fact that climate change is a sustainable development challenge. We should adhere steadfastly to the Rio principles, in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. We must take fully into account that poverty eradication and economic and social development are the paramount priorities of developing countries. Hence, we must ensure that the discussion on climate change is placed in its proper context so that it does not undermine the overall discourse on sustainable development.

Urgent action is needed now to fully implement the commitments under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, especially commitments on financing for adaptation, technology transfer and capacity-building, if we are to make progress towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals of developing countries, in particular the internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Urgent action on commitments is particularly needed, as climate change threatens the livelihoods of the very poor and vulnerable developing countries, in particular States in Africa, the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries, the small island developing States and the disaster-prone developing countries. The Group is of the view that, while addressing the challenge of climate change, the most affected countries and the most vulnerable countries should be given adequate attention and support.

Parties in the developed world must take the lead in addressing the implementation gap, since the extent to which parties in the developing world can effectively respond to the challenge depends on the extent to which the parties in the developed world fulfil their commitments relating to financing and technology transfer.

While the United Nations can support the efforts of developing countries in formulating policies for attracting climate-change-related investment flows, adaptation and nationally appropriate mitigation actions will have to be enabled by technology, financing and capacity-building that are commensurate with the magnitude of the tasks ahead of us; that is, in a measurable, reportable and verifiable manner, as agreed in the Bali Plan of Action on the Regional and Subregional Economic Cooperation of the Developing Countries. The provision of financial resources is a binding commitment of developed-country parties. Clear guidance should be given to facilitate access to financial resources and investments without conditionalities. It is essential that such financial resources be considered not as official development assistance, but as additional assistance, and be in compliance with existing binding commitments under the Convention. Further, financing for adaptation to climate change and the impact of response measures should not be a reallocation or realignment of existing development financing.

Developing countries should be provided with greater access to cost-effective, efficient and affordable advanced clean technologies. The Group of 77 and China has repeatedly led calls for developing countries to have greater access to climate-friendly technologies. Efforts in that regard need to be scaled up. Furthermore, the United Nations can play an important role through the promotion of an intellectual property rights regime that facilitates the transfer of such technologies.

The Group of 77 and China reiterates its call for increased support for capacity-building in developing countries, to enhance national efforts to promote an integrated approach to climate-change-response measures and sustainable-development planning.

The efforts of the United Nations in supporting national adaptation activities must be strengthened so that developing countries can achieve their sustainable development goals while responding to the challenges of climate change. The role of the United Nations in supporting overall development efforts is vital. However, the G77 and China finds that technology transfer and financing have not been addressed adequately in the background documents made available in preparation for today's debate.

On the issue of partnerships, the G77 and China is of the view that multi-stakeholder partnerships have an important role to play in addressing climate change. The United Nations system should assist in fostering and promoting partnerships in support of national efforts. However, partnerships should not replace official development assistance or international cooperation.

Additionally, South-South cooperation is useful in the area of adaptation efforts, and greater support for South-South cooperation can also help developing countries better respond to the challenges of climate change. However, South-South cooperation should not be considered within the context of multi-stakeholder partnerships. Further, South-South cooperation on climate change should complement North-South cooperation.

In General Assembly resolution 62/8, Member States requested a comprehensive report providing an overview of the activities of the United Nations system in relation to climate change. On the basis of that mandate, the G77 and China anticipated a factual report that takes stock of current United Nations system activities in that regard. As such, there is no mandate with regard to "an indication of the way forward", and "coordination of the United Nations system action on climate change". That remains within the purview of the Member States. Work on coordination mechanisms and structures or frameworks, including clusters of activity or lead agencies, must be the subject of intergovernmental consideration and decision prior to implementation.

In general, the United Nations system entities should assist in the effective implementation of the provisions, commitments and action plans of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Coordination of United Nations system activities to enhance its role in meeting the challenge of climate change requires intergovernmental consideration, agreement and oversight by Member States.

The G77 and China recognizes the primacy of the United Nations in directing and supporting global efforts to meet the global challenge of climate change and in supporting the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The General Assembly, given its universality, should unequivocally urge parties to undertake action now to meet their commitments under the Convention, provide clear policy direction in this regard and support the Bali Plan of Action.

The G77 and China believes that the road to Copenhagen, where the concluding talks on the current process on the Bali Road Map will be held in 2009, will be a difficult one, particularly for developing countries and the poorest and most vulnerable. Leadership will therefore be critical if our response is to reflect the scale of the challenge. To cover adaptation, technology transfer and financing, and mitigation, we need a global response that is effective and comprehensive, and reflects the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Without rapid and tangible efforts by developed countries in that regard, climate change will lead to increased poverty and will negate our efforts at achieving sustainable development.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Tavau Teii, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Tuvalu.

Mr. Teii (Tuvalu): First of all, I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this thematic debate. I also wish to congratulate and commend you on your foresight in encouraging a United Nations-wide discussion on the issue of climate change. Allow me to also thank the Secretary-General for his continuous commitment and leadership on the issue of climate change and welcome his report on the overview of United Nations activities in relation to climate change.

Without a doubt, climate change is one of the greatest challenges that faces humanity today. We clearly need a comprehensive approach to addressing this issue. I am pleased to note that the Bali Conference in December 2007 set forth a strategy that is an important milestone in our journey to fight climate change.

Tuvalu fully associates itself with the statements to be delivered by the representatives of the Kingdom of Tonga, Grenada and Bangladesh, on behalf of the Pacific Island countries, the Alliance of Small Island States and the Group of Least Developed Countries, respectively.

Therefore, I would like to focus my speech on just one of the questions for discussion: how can the United Nations system assist in scaling up support for adaptation? It is recognized that adaptation to climate change needs to be part of the policy and investment decisions of countries, the private sector, international agencies and other relevant actors. We need to enhance networking capacities and coordination for international joint action.

Adaptation is undoubtedly a crucial issue for an extremely vulnerable small atoll island nation like Tuvalu. I need only highlight the fact that our highest point above sea level is only 4 metres to emphasize our vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, especially sea level rise.

Last year, Tuvalu produced an international blueprint on adaptation, which we presented as a submission to the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. For those who may be interested in reading our blueprint, I have included a website address for it as a footnote to the written text of my speech. This blueprint highlights a number of areas where we envisage greater collaboration within the United Nations system. Let me highlight some of them.

First, it is very clear that financial resources for adaptation are completely inadequate. Last year, Oxfam International released a report which suggested that the adaptation needs of developing countries will cost a minimum of $50 billion per year, a figure higher than the current World Bank estimate of $10.4 billion annually. We must work together, under the umbrella of the United Nations, to find these additional funds.

One means of increasing the funding for adaptation is through the creation of what we call a burden-sharing mechanism. Funding for this mechanism could come from a levy on international aviation and maritime transport. Some exceptions would apply to the levy so that we would not create a burden for the least developed countries and small island developing States. Therefore, we need the United Nations to develop a collaborative arrangement with the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Maritime Organization to develop such a levy. We would encourage the convening of a meeting of senior officers from those organizations with senior officials from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Climate Change Convention some time this year to facilitate the appropriate arrangements for this levy.

Secondly, we need collaborative action among United Nations institutions and non-governmental organizations to develop a comprehensive approach to long-term adaptation action. As a first step, we envisage a collaborative programme between the Convention secretariat and parties and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and its participating countries. We believe that a special coordination committee should be established under the auspices of the General Assembly. This climate change adaptation implementation committee would also include other United Nations agencies, such as UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and other institutions such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and various non-governmental organizations with experience in the field of adaptation. Again, we would like to see this committee established this year. We therefore hope that the General Assembly will be convened to adopt a resolution in support of such a committee as soon as possible.

Thirdly, our international blueprint on adaptation also proposes the establishment of an international climate insurance pool. This would be an internationally sourced pool of funds for an insurance mechanism to provide support to the most vulnerable communities for meeting the costs of rebuilding after climate-related disasters. We envisage that such an

insurance facility would be administered by a special group within UNDP under the guidance of existing reinsurance companies. Here, internationally agreed climate threshold triggers for payouts to communities would need to be established. We encourage UNDP to facilitate a special meeting some time this year to begin the process of establishing this insurance facility.

These ideas I have just elaborated upon are but three among a number of others in our international blueprint on adaptation. We lay no special claim to ownership of this blueprint. We would like the United Nations system to embrace it and take it on as a truly United Nations blueprint. We encourage you, Mr. President, to look closely at the blueprint and work with your colleagues to develop these ideas further. We strongly encourage you to consider convening a special meeting of the General Assembly for the drafting and endorsement of a resolution to facilitate the implementation of these ideas on adaptation.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Janez Podobnik, Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Slovenia.

Mr. Podobnik (Slovenia): It is an honour to address the Assembly in this important thematic debate on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this declaration.

Climate change represents one of the major challenges facing our planet. We can already see its impacts as it threatens to undermine the livelihoods of future generations. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published its authoritative findings in 2007 and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its exceptional work. The report clearly states that anthropogenic global greenhouse gas emissions increased by about 70 per cent between 1970 and 2004. Our current understanding of the problem and the high risks involved leave no option for any responsible policymaker but to act. In this respect, today's thematic debate is most welcome as a way to further develop and support the decisive role of the United Nations in this matter.

Climate change is upon us, and we believe it is time to act. The European Union has put climate change at the top of its political agenda. International collective action is crucial for an effective, efficient and equitable response to the challenges posed by climate change. Working together will benefit every one of us.

The European Union will continue its efforts aimed at building international consensus on the urgent need to take further and stronger post-2012 action. We are doing our homework by implementing and further developing comprehensive community climate change policies. The European Commission recently presented the legislative Climate Action and Renewable Energy Package, which will be instrumental in shaping a response in line with our commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the EU by at least 20 per cent by 2020, relative to 1990 levels. The Package has provisions to reduce the EU's emissions by as much as 30 per cent, as part of a global agreement in which all developed countries commit themselves to comparable efforts and developing countries also contribute further. We are convinced that transforming Europe into a highly energy efficient, low-carbon economy will improve our energy security and strengthen our competitiveness. Let me reiterate the European Union's objective to limit the global average temperature increase to less than 2 centigrade degrees relative to pre-industrial levels.

Last year was a turning point for international action against climate change. The Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change underlined the urgent need for action. Subsequently, all parties at the Climate Conference in Bali agreed to launch an inclusive negotiating process on a new global and comprehensive post-2012 agreement in December 2009 in Copenhagen. Importantly, it was agreed that all developed and developing countries need to take appropriate action to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

The Bali agreement addresses a shared vision for long-term cooperative action and identifies four key building blocks: mitigation, adaptation, technology and financing. That is a very important step forward, but it leaves many important decisions to be made in the coming two years. The EU has already presented its general ideas in that respect. In the view of the EU, all the building blocks are equally important and must be

dealt with accordingly. The main objectives of mitigation and adaptation cannot be achieved without supporting the development and transfer of clean technologies and scaling up and redirecting investment and finance flows.

The Bali Conference also took important decisions on several other issues, including the launching of demonstration activities aimed at reducing deforestation; the finalization of arrangements for the Adaptation Fund, which will help developing countries adapt to the impacts of climate change; and a strategic programme on the transfer of technologies to developing countries.

Our world is increasingly interconnected. It is thus impossible to talk about climate change and development as two unrelated issues. Climate change is a sustainable development challenge that will affect our natural environment as well as our social and economic development. The goal of halving the proportion of poor people in the world by the year 2015 will be impossible to achieve if we do not give due consideration to the natural resources and the environment our livelihoods depend upon. However, meeting development needs and achieving poverty eradication while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the impact of climate change will present a challenge to all of us.

Several important events will be taking place this year, such as the dialogue on financing for development, a high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals and the Hokkaido-Toyako summit under the Japanese presidency of the Group of Eight. We must ensure that climate change will be addressed in those debates and that the relationship among climate change, energy security, environment, development, finance and trade is further defined and explored. Since it cuts across the four building blocks identified in Bali, the integration of climate into development plans is crucial. The overarching objective is to achieve sustainable development, and the United Nations should play a key role in supporting integrated policy- and decision-making at all levels.

The EU is committed to promoting climate-focused stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere and adaptation in the context of sustainable development. Increased integration of adaptation and mitigation efforts into national sustainable development strategies is therefore essential to combating climate change.

If the attempts to reach a global post-2012 agreement on climate change are to breed results, the process leading to such an agreement and its scope must be all-encompassing.

Nevertheless, the key issue remains: how can we all contribute? Unequivocal scientific evidence, the increasing impact of climate events and the resulting increase in public attention have elevated climate change to a high position on the political agenda. The international community needs to respond to that challenge. The United Nations provides the appropriate multilateral framework within which to deal with the issue, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the only forum in which global decisions about future actions can be agreed.

The time has come for the United Nations to strengthen its response to climate change and speak with a united voice. The United Nations system must be capable of working together to support international efforts to address the negative impacts of climate change: through the UNFCCC, as the appropriate multilateral framework for negotiations, as we look to a global agreement on a post-2012 framework; through the work of the agencies, funds and programmes that are best placed to provide an integrated response to the complementary challenges of promoting sustainable development, achieving the Millennium Development Goals and tackling the impacts of climate change; and through the voice of the Secretary-General, who has so effectively galvanized the international response over the past year.

It is in that light that the EU fully supports the efforts under the leadership of the Secretary-General and carried out by the Chief Executives Board to achieve a coordinated United Nations approach to climate change. Much good work is already under way in many parts of the United Nations system. The continuation of that process will enable the United Nations system to identify its strengths and, consequently, the areas in which it can maximize its contribution to fighting climate change.

We, as Member States, must also take responsibility by supporting that process through our own actions. Implementing a post-2012 climate change framework will present fundamental challenges to the

global community and calls for strengthened international environmental governance. Of particular importance will be the financing of enhanced mitigation and adaptation efforts, which calls for new and innovative concepts. That will require enhanced cooperation between various stakeholders from the private and public sectors.

Climate change has the potential to redraw the face of our planet. Science has clearly underlined that the time has come for all of us to act. According to polls undertaken in many countries of the world, a vast proportion of the world's population believes that the international community must take a different path if we are to prevent the consequences of climate change. Several events have shown us that there is increasing political will to do so.

However, there is always room for improvement. The United Nations can play an important role in assisting in this process, not only by addressing the capacity gap to act and thus safeguarding Millennium Development Goals, but also by leading the process to generate global consciousness. Certain activities can be undertaken by the system, within the framework of the mandates provided to it by Member States.

However, at the end of the day, we must not forget that the United Nations is the sum of its Member States and it is up to us to determine the size of that sum.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Rachmat Witoelar, Minister of Environment of Indonesia and President of the United Nations Climate Change Conference.

Mr. Witoelar (Indonesia): At the outset, Mr. President, allow me to thank you for convening this important event to address one of the major challenges to humanity: climate change. I sincerely commend the initiative to keep this issue as a top priority on the agenda of the General Assembly at its current session.

Allow me to state that I align myself with the statement of the representative of Antigua and Barbuda, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Just a few months ago, the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali agreed on the Bali Action Plan, also known as the Bali Road Map. The Bali Road Map was a strategic and important milestone. It marked a crucial turning point, not only in the area of climate change, but also for humanity. The political commitment was unprecedented, and we must continue on that path.

The exceptional feature of the Bali Road Map is that it reflects a common understanding that no country is immune to climate change. Responding to it certainly requires the effort of developed and developing countries. More action can be expected to take place in the developing world, with more ambitious commitments by developed countries.

But let us bear in mind that the window of opportunity is short; we have only 2008 and 2009 to detail the four building blocks: mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and financing. Based on our success in Bali, we are convinced that political partnership must be nurtured, and that it should continue to guide and imbue the negotiation process in the two years ahead.

While political partnerships are essential, the next question is what kind of partnership will contribute to more effective implementation. In my view, a genuine partnership involves all stakeholders who recognize their common but differentiated responsibilities. That implies that we must muster our sense of urgency to make the necessary choices to curb global warming. There is no other way to do that but for us to begin thinking outside the box. All of us must dare to recalibrate our new perspective and introduce fresh approaches to our problems. It is important for all of us to do more and to do things differently in our entire life-sphere. All of us can and must contribute to completing our hard work in safeguarding our planet.

Indonesia firmly believes that our attempt to cope with climate change problems requires the active involvement of all nations — developed and developing, large and small, North and South — and the active engagement of the private sector, civil society and every human being, of every generation and background. Partnership, within and across nations, is the key to our global environmental and climatic concerns.

For that reason, Indonesia, as the President of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, feels compelled to continue to play its role in implementing those commitments by working together with all stakeholders. Together with President of the

upcoming fourteenth and fifteenth sessions of the Conference, we will endeavour to ensure the beginning of a new chapter in the history of climate change in 2009.

I am also pleased to state that, as part of Indonesia's commitment to participating with all nations to address climate change, we have launched a National Action Plan for Climate Change. The National Action Plan serves as an implementation guide for climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts by all stakeholders in Indonesia.

Let me also emphasize that Indonesia welcomes and recognizes all initiatives and discussions within various international processes. They all serve to provide valuable input to the process under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), including the recent outcomes of the major economic meeting held in Honolulu, Hawaii, which strengthened the success of the Bali Road Map and promoted energy efficiency. It is essential, however, that existing and new commitments post-2012 are deliberated within the UNFCCC, as it is the key instrument and the proper forum for addressing climate change.

It is pertinent to underline that the United Nations has a legitimate role in bridging development and climate change concerns with all stakeholders. The United Nations should therefore be well equipped to address the challenge of development and climate change in a more coherent and focused manner, particularly for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The United Nations effort to bolster cooperation within the Secretariat and with the broader United Nations system is a step in the right direction. To that end, the United Nations may consider the need to integrate all relevant existing frameworks in order to create an effective umbrella and mechanism to respond to climate change in the future. All United Nations activities related to climate change should be delivered in a coherent package.

Responding to climate change will require humanity's total capacity. Let us build togetherness and global ownership at all levels and in all sectors to battle a common enemy. The panel discussions conducted yesterday clearly indicated — and, as a matter of fact, reaffirmed — our conviction of the growing strategic importance of building partnerships. We have attained ample political commitments from Governments, the private sector and non-governmental organizations around the world, and hence we at the United Nations must cultivate the political momentum and global call, and translate them into policy, action plans and consistent implementation. After all, that is the main message of our theme today: the United Nations and the world at work.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Champika Ranawaka, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Ranawaka (Sri Lanka): Allow me to first thank you, Mr. President, and the Secretary-General for the timely convening of this important meeting.

The degree of the impact of climate change varies from country to country. But the stark reality is that the countries with lower economic status and with low emissions levels are the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change. The global per capita carbon threshold is 2,200 kilograms; by comparison, Sri Lanka's current emissions level is as low as 600 kilograms. In reality, that means that we could increase per capita emissions threefold. However, such an approach would definitely contribute to a critical imbalance in the system. Therefore, island nations like my own, which are highly vulnerable to climate change, are faced with the dual challenge of achieving economic development and responding to climate change as well.

We all agree that, despite various interventions at all levels, atmospheric temperature continues to rise. The concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is also on the increase. As we are now entering into a new phase of formulating strategies to respond to climate change, we need to think afresh.

The present generation, including each person in this Hall, me and all of us together, has the responsibility of ensuring a better life for future generations. The environment and all its resources, which the present generation uses — and also misuses — is something we have borrowed from future generations, those born and yet to be born.

Therefore, unless there is a critical paradigm shift in our thinking even at this late stage, current trends will continue jeopardizing the right of present and future generations to live.

There are two options before us. One is to continue the current practices and pass a huge environmental debt to future generations of living beings of the developing countries.

It is estimated that the current carbon budget will be exhausted by 2032. Therefore, if we continue the blame game and carry on with business as usual, we will require at least two more planets to sustain the present growth. The only option is to work together to restore the already degraded environment and natural resource base and build strong environmental capital so that the survival of future generations is ensured.

We all have contributed to the environmental debt in different proportions. As we all know, the human development index reports of the United Nations Development Programme rank all countries of the globe based on certain criteria, and per capita purchasing parity is one of them. We know that, with maybe a very few exceptions, countries with high per capita income also have a high share of greenhouse gas emissions. In contrast, the contribution to global warming by less developed countries with low per capita income is comparatively minimal. Thus, if we consider this very critical environmental element, which goes hand in hand with so-called economic development, the picture we see will be totally different from what we see today.

In keeping with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, it is thus not fair to expect the developing nations to shoulder the full burden of responding to climate change impact. Historically, their contributions to climate change have been minimal, and they will continue to be so.

Therefore, our new agreement needs to be developed to include all these different aspects. In parallel, we also need to make a candid assessment of the success of the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. Our own assessment is that those instruments have not made a significant impact towards reversing the present trends.

At this stage, it is also important to recognize the overarching nature of climate change: it can have direct and indirect influence on any activity on Earth. Thus, various initiatives under other environmental treaties would automatically become subsets of the climate change phenomenon. Such a realignment of activities would significantly contribute towards optimal utilization of resources while minimizing the chances of overlaps, both at the global and the national levels.

There is no miracle cure for climate change-related problems; nor can these challenges be resolved by any single country on its own. Thus, first and the foremost, it is critical that all actors concerned implement the measures to which they have already committed.

Before I conclude, please allow me to quote from the Karaniyameththa Suththa, which contains key important teachings of Lord Buddha. As Lord Buddha said in one of his sermons, the world is a complex, integrated system in which man is one among many players; all players should respect one another's right to survive. This world belongs to present generations as well as those yet to be born, and we must protect it the way a mother looks after her only child. Therefore, on behalf of the future generations, let us take guidance from these noble truths in our quest for finding solutions to this, the greatest challenge facing humanity today.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Jacqueline Cramer, Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning of the Netherlands.

Ms. Cramer (Netherlands): Just over a month ago, the world gathered in Indonesia to agree on much-needed further steps in the global fight against climate change. That meeting was a turning point in our efforts to address climate change. Now is the time to start implementing the Bali Action Plan without delay. In that effort, the United Nations will have to play a leading role. I therefore warmly welcome the leadership of the Secretary-General in this regard and applaud his decision to make the fight against climate change such a high priority for the United Nations.

The report of the Secretary-General on United Nations activities on climate change (A/62/644) makes it clear that the wider United Nations family is already significantly contributing. But further steps are now needed. I would therefore strongly invite the Secretary-General to make further recommendations on the specific role of the different parts of the United Nations system in ensuring a coordinated response to climate change.

With that in mind, I would like to focus on one particular topic. The global fight against climate

change requires us to mobilize resources on a nearly unprecedented scale — not only human and political resources, but also financial flows. We will need to find billions of dollars over the next 20 years to place the world on a low-carbon, sustainable-energy path, to take measures to protect vulnerable populations from the impacts of climate change and to tackle the issue of deforestation effectively.

The bulk of the extra financial flows will have to come from the private sector. In seeking market opportunities and pursuing innovation, it will have to scale up climate-friendly and energy-related investments. To make this happen, Governments should create a favourable investment climate, provide the right incentives, as well as work towards a long-term international framework. Today, such incentives are often lacking. So, let us engage the private sector more actively in the discussion on how to formulate a post-2012 arrangement that is cost-effective, flexible and fair.

But, of course, public funding remains an important source as well. Industrialized countries should, at the national level, support and stimulate climate change initiatives of the private sector, of non-governmental organizations and of society at large. Moreover, additional public funding should be mobilized to assist developing countries in their particular mitigation and adaptation actions. This will also help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

As I have said on earlier occasions, the industrialized countries have caused the main part of the climate change problem, and it is therefore up to the industrialized world to provide the main part of the solution. We will have to lead this effort. We should therefore discuss what should be done in that regard.

Let me highlight two points. Firstly, there is already a great deal of funding out there. Let us make better use of it, avoid a proliferation of funds and better harmonize existing resources. The Netherlands has made available €500 million for investment in, and promotion of, renewable energy in developing countries. We will make sure that this funding fits in well with the many other initiatives currently undertaken and will address the priorities of our partner countries.

Secondly, there is a need for additional and predictable public financing. The question is which financial mechanisms we should put into place to manage these financial resources. Here too, the United Nations system is uniquely equipped to support us; I have in mind especially the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and also the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

In closing, I will use my position as Dutch Minister of the Environment to further the international discussion of the financing issue and promote partnerships with the private sector. I firmly believe that progress in this area is the key that can unlock the door to solving the problem of climate change.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Angelo Reyes, Secretary of Energy and Chairman of the Presidential Task Force on Climate Change of the Philippines.

Mr. Reyes (Philippines): As a developing country, the Philippines accounts for a minuscule share of global greenhouse gas emissions. Yet, as a tropical archipelago located in both the typhoon belt and the Pacific Rim's so-called ring of fire, our country is among the most highly vulnerable to the effects of global warming. It is for that reason that we welcome this initiative of the United Nations to host a thematic debate on climate change.

As a member of the Group of 77 and China, this statement is also aligned with the concerns that were presented by our colleague from Antigua and Barbuda earlier this morning.

In view of the limited time available, I shall deliver an abbreviated version of the prepared statement that is being made available for reference. Let me summarize our delegation's position and our recommendations by underscoring five key points.

First, we wish to echo the statement made yesterday by General Assembly President Srgjan Kerim that we need "a common vision, a global consensus, a global alliance for action".

For clearly an issue like climate change cannot be addressed by individual nations, or even by an institution as broad-based as the United Nations. If, indeed, scientific consensus has been reached that human activity is the main cause of global warming, then our planet would best be served by the moral suasion of the United Nations in affirming that consensus and working towards the fulfilment of

national commitments to halt, if not reverse, the tragic trajectory of climate change.

Secondly, over lunch yesterday, Sir Richard Branson stressed the pre-eminent need for scientific action in the light of the reality that mitigation and other prescient strategies will do nothing to thin the layer of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This thin layer is already pushing global temperatures on a precariously upward path, even as we speak. This opens up another potential for United Nations intervention, perhaps as the custodian of an international fund to activate research by a multinational group of scientists to develop a gas or a sophisticated sequestration process that can restore the balance in our atmosphere to pre-industrial levels.

Thirdly, we affirm our support for the Bali Road Map, which precludes the notion that a scientific silver bullet can save humankind from the ill effects of its largely unsustainable development track. We cannot downplay the importance of mitigation and adaptation strategies and the requisite technological and financial contributions set out in the Road Map.

Fourthly, we recommend the articulation of social mobilization as an integral dimension of the Bali Road Map. Yesterday's discussions drew consensus on the need for partnership based on good faith, solidarity and scientific knowledge at every level. What seems to be lacking is a sense of urgency that cuts evenly across all those levels of partnership.

Alongside the ranks of alarmed international scientists and the legions of passionate non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is a spectrum of stakeholders with varying degrees of appreciation of the climate change problem and what needs to be done about it.

Governments are typically caught between competing priorities. In the developing world, sparse Government resources tend to be focused on meeting people's basic needs. In the private sector, on the other hand, the wisdom of the triple bottom line has yet to catch on: a critical mass of chief executive officers has yet to subscribe to the view that profits can be sustained over the long term only if a company takes care to deliver social and environmental benefits at the same time.

Communities, like Governments, are beset by competing priorities. Climate change, while a very serious global concern, still has to be translated into concrete issues that will make it relevant to scientific or specific stakeholders, such as vulnerable island communities and marginal farmers. This is where NGOs, as the ubiquitous links to grass-roots stakeholders, fit perfectly into the picture. In addition, as Mr. Martin Khor of the Third World Network has underscored, they inject the economics of activism that push governments, both national and local, to sort out their priorities and keep corporations transparent and consistent with the principles they espouse.

I believe that one of the most potent formulas for success on any development agenda is a combination of the authority and structure of Government, the resources and enterprise of the private sector and the passion and persistence of civil society. This triumvirate, working in harmony, constitutes a formidable platform for sustainable local action. For this reason, our climate change response framework in the Philippines explicitly brings in social mobilization as a vital dimension.

Just last week, we concluded a multisectoral Philippine Energy Summit. Summit participants from various stakeholder communities concluded that we are entering a new era of unprecedented opportunity to fast-track plans to develop renewable and climate-friendly energy sources as a way of insulating our country from the effects of future oil price shocks. Already, one out of every five light bulbs in our country is powered by geothermal energy, and we are aiming to become the number-one geothermal producer in the world within the next 10 years. With the help of other key stakeholders, we also expect to make significant strides in developing our hydro, wind, solar and biomass energy resources as well.

In the area of energy demand management, our President has mandated the phasing out of all incandescent light bulbs in the Philippines and their replacement with compact fluorescent lamps by the end of 2009, making the Philippines the second Asia-Pacific country, after Australia, to embark on such a ground-breaking initiative.

Fifthly and finally, we support the expressed desire of the United Nations to integrate disparate efforts to help States mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. This is a timely call for purposeful convergence that should encompass other international development partners extending technical and financial assistance in that field as well.

It would seem incumbent upon the United Nations to seize the role of aligning priorities and programmes within a holistic framework while being mindful of institutional boundaries and mandates so as to guarantee efficiency and strategic impact in the allocation of resources. We propose that the United Nations convene a high-level meeting of all international development agencies for precisely that purpose. In that manner, the contours of the Bali Road Map can be more clearly defined in terms of strict signs demarcating lines of responsibility and commitment across programme areas and across regions and States, while servicing interventional gaps.

It is even conceivable that information technology giants like Google, Yahoo or Microsoft would willingly provide the engine by which to map out the whole range of available technology and financing options in real time, side by side with a picture of evolving demand at the global, regional and national levels. If the creation of a virtual market for climate-oriented interventions can be pulled off, that would be a partnership made in planetary heaven.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Maciej Nowicki, Minister of Environment of Poland.

Mr. Nowicki (Poland): This year in Poland, the fourteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will take place from 1 to 12 December. Poles are very proud of the opportunity to contribute to that important process. The Conference will sum up the achievements of the Convention to date and the results attained within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol.

We would like to ensure that the Poznan Conference makes an important contribution to setting out specific measures in the scope of climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Poznan Conference should also be an important milestone for reaching consensus on commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which should be achieved at the Copenhagen Conference in 2009. At the Poznan Conference, we would like to focus special attention on demonstrating concrete examples of successful technology transfers and measures related to adaptation to climate change with a view to disseminating such good practices.

We want to showcase, in the form of an exhibition, inventions and pioneering organizational schemes serving to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A United Nations conference, with the participation of representatives of almost 200 nations, is an excellent place for demonstrating such good examples in order to disseminate them as widely as possible. It is my hope that the exhibition, along with discussion panels within the framework of the Conference, will be a step towards the protection of the Earth's climate.

In conclusion, I would like once again to invite representatives to come in December to Poland and the hospitable city of Poznan, hoping that the fourteenth Conference of the Parties will be an important forum for making concrete progress on climate protection on our mother Earth.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Charles Michel, Minister for Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of Belgium.

Mr. Michel (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): As the most recent *Human Development Report* of the United Nations Development Programme demonstrates, we can no longer distinguish the climate agenda from that of development. It is in that conviction that, in my capacity as Minister for Development Cooperation, I am participating in this debate, and that the Government of Belgium has decided to convene, on 7 March, an international conference on the links between climate and development cooperation issues.

As others have said before me, the time has come for action. Beyond scientific and environmental considerations lies the logic of economics. As calculated and stated by Sir Nicholas Stern, the cost of inaction would be 20 times higher than that of action. Another salient point is the demonstration in a recent study concluded by the World Bank that 55 per cent of its projects are vulnerable to climate change and that no less than 25 per cent are vulnerable to substantial risk, while, as we all know, only 2 per cent have been tested for potential vulnerability to climate change.

The primary victims of climate change are now, and will be even more so in the future, the developing countries. In order to meet that global challenge, a global response is clearly required. In that regard, the United Nations is obviously in a unique position. As emphasized in the Secretary-General's most recent overview of United Nations activities in relation to climate change, numerous actions have already been initiated, of course, yet the major future challenge to

the United Nations will be coordinating such activities and their effectiveness, which must help to enhance their added value. The Member States will have to assume their responsibilities and contribute to developing a structured response. It is only such a coherent structure and the mobilization and involvement of all stakeholders that will allow us to avoid fragmentation, which will necessarily lead to failure.

In that connection, Belgium welcomes the results of the Bali Conference and the dynamic process it launched. The next two years will be of crucial importance to giving concrete content to the targets set in Bali. I should like to submit for the General Assembly's consideration two specific ideas, precisely because we must act now.

On Friday, I will propose to the Belgian Government the creation of a systematic mechanism to mitigate the carbon dioxide emissions created by the official travels of staff members of the Belgian Government and Administration. I believe that public officials must be role models in that field. Although it is clearly a symbolic gesture in the global perspective, it will testify to a proactive stance that will be crucial to making a reality of the Bali commitments.

In the same vein, I would offer another suggestion. Why should the United Nations not consider the possibility of creating a mechanism that would allow it systematically to assess the climatic impact of its activities, be it the deployment of a peacekeeping operation or the launch of a development programme. This test, which I would call a climate test, should make it possible from now on to take well-informed decisions without, of course, creating more bureaucracy. It is a question of verifying whether the actions undertaken have a negative, positive or neutral impact on climate.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Bernard Kouchner, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of France.

Mr. Kouchner (France) (*spoke in French*): France aligns itself with the statement made by the presidency of the European Union.

First of all, I wish to welcome the initiative taken by the President of the General Assembly. Our meeting today is particularly appropriate. In other words, it is dealing with the right subject, in the right place, at the right time.

It is the right subject, because we know that climate change today is an issue that requires the mobilization of the United Nations as a whole.

It is the right place, because the General Assembly must assume its responsibilities on a question having such grave consequences in terms of economies and development. So it must assume its responsibilities.

And it is the right time, because, following the meeting organized by the Secretary-General on 24 September, we share the principal diagnostics and we know the course to be followed. After the unexpected agreement on the Bali Road Map, the road to Copenhagen is short, but it is strewn with pitfalls.

Three principles should therefore very quickly guide the efforts of the international community — responsibility, equity and pragmatism.

The first principle is responsibility. Thanks to the splendid work done by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change — which was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, may I remind the Assembly — the economic actors and world public opinion are now aware of what is at stake. A global agreement on the post-2012 regime is within our reach, since both hearts and minds are ready for it. It now remains for the political decision-makers around the world to become committed, and those gathered here today represent them. As stressed in the Stern Review, the cost of inaction is too high; we cannot inflict the consequences on future generations.

Europe knows what its duty is. It knows what is expected of it in this as in many other areas. It will not shirk its duty. The European Union today is establishing unprecedented measures that should make it possible to reduce by 20 per cent its emissions by 2020. France, for its part, has legislation committing to a 75 per cent reduction in its emissions by 2050. This resolve is shared by all of French society, which is aware of the importance of what is at stake. And during the French presidency of the European Union, starting on 1 July 2008, we will make some common-sense proposals to all our European partners.

The second principle is equity. The exemplary behaviour of a few will not suffice. It is the international community as a whole that must react.

The United Nations alone provides a framework for universal action. Only the United Nations can reaffirm and fulfil the founding principle of shared but differentiated responsibility.

Here, the least developed countries can make their voices heard. It is here in this forum also that those that finally achieve economic growth can press their legitimate claims. It is here also that those whose very existence is threatened by sea-level rise, desertification, the depletion of natural resources, health risks — I repeat, health risks — and natural disasters can have their say. As always, those perils are both universal and inequitable and both indiscriminate and cruel in their targeting. It is always the poor that suffer more than the rich, particularly in the area that I stressed earlier, public health. And it is in this forum that it will be possible to resolve the apparent contradiction between development and environmental challenges, as is mentioned in the latest human development report of the United Nations Development Programme.

The link between combating poverty, the requirements of economic growth — energy security, in particular — and the necessary struggle against climate change can and should be contained in an innovative policy that, I am sure, will help to define a new paradigm of collective security and development. The United Nations is the only body equal to an ambition of such magnitude.

That does not mean, of course, that other forums are not useful, whether it be the Group of Eight, which I hope will adapt and grow, or the Major Economies Meeting. But their role is to help to produce an agreement that can be pursued only within the framework of the United Nations.

The third principle is pragmatism. The magnitude of what is at stake and of the task is such that we cannot favour one form of action over another. There is no cure-all, no single solution. Progress, as is often the case, can be achieved only by feeling our way, by trial and error, by diversifying initiatives and levels of action.

If we are to resort to market mechanisms to finally establish a global price for carbon emissions, we should perhaps also think about a carbon tax. If we are to develop technology transfers from the North to the South, we must also promote South-South cooperation, which looks very promising. In particular, we must encourage specific cooperation agreements based on a sectoral approach by identifying projects that are suited to each local situation.

Responsibility, equity, pragmatism — on the strength of these three principles, the work of the United Nations can today acquire a new dimension and enable us to take the decisive step that our citizens are awaiting and that our duty imposes upon us. Time is of the essence. France is determined to respond to this pressing challenge.

That is what we in France were doing at the national level during the great moment of debate, evaluation and cross-cutting proposals at the meeting known as the "Grenelle Environment Forum".

And that is what we intend to do here in the General Assembly. Like all our partners in the European Union, we want to see governance on questions of climate change and the environment make speedy progress. We are committed to the values of multilateralism, and we therefore support all initiatives that will make it possible to enhance the effectiveness of the work of the United Nations in this area. We want to see "delivering as one" to address climate change become a reality. The Assembly alone can make this happen. Hence my presence here.

But we must be careful not to spread our efforts too thin. The new and healthy realization of what the environmental challenge involves is creating a host of initiatives that must be better coordinated.

The United Nations system now has irreplaceable tools in the areas of scientific expertise, observation and natural disaster warning and prevention. With greater coordination, we finally will have unparalleled means with which to address climate change in all its dimensions.

By altering the ecological balance and causing desertification, depletion of resources and population displacement, climate change today is contributing to the exacerbation of crisis situations and conflict. It is a global challenge that requires a response from the United Nations. The Security Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, must acquire the requisite tools to cope with these threats.

We must be bold, we must be resolute and we must be united, because we have no other choice.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Abdullah, Minister of Home Affairs, Housing and Environment of Maldives.

Mr. Abdullah (Maldives): Let me begin by extending to you, Sir, my gratitude for convening this very important debate. Allow me also to congratulate Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on his deep commitment to and leadership in attaching the highest priority to climate change issues.

In 1938, a British engineer, Guy Stewart Callendar, delivered a speech in London in which he argued that the climate was changing and that emissions of carbon dioxide by human industry were principally to blame. Scientists of the day were intrigued but unconvinced. In 1987, our President, Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, stood before this Assembly and stated that climate change would result in the death of our nation and others like it if urgent corrective measures were not taken. Yet again, leaders and scientists were intrigued but unconvinced. It has taken seven decades of rigorous debate and dedicated research, but today the evidence is clear. Climate change is real, accelerating and human-induced. Today, we all accept climate change as the biggest global emergency of our times.

We have taken our time to reach scientific and political consensus on the nature and threat of climate change. As we now begin to focus on solutions to the climate crisis, time is a luxury we can no longer afford. We should therefore work to build on our momentum from Bali over the coming year by pursuing the following three strategic objectives. First, we must mobilize popular support for climate protection by stressing the human rather than the scientific dimensions of climate change. Secondly, we must ensure that United Nations programmes promote climate protection as an instrument to support sustainable development. Thirdly, we must initiate a programme of governance reform to build adaptive capacity in the most vulnerable States.

Urgent and ambitious actions to tackle climate change will require unprecedented public support. If we are to mobilize the people of the world in that global fight, we will need to make sure that they realize what is really at stake. When we speak about how climate change will compromise biodiversity, let us always remember that hidden behind statistics on species loss is the face of the fisherman who will lose his livelihood as rising ocean temperatures destroy the coral and decimate the fish stocks. When we refer to the alarming decline in food production from increased drought and soil erosion, let us remember the farmer who will no longer be able to feed his family. When we consider the increased frequency and intensity of storms, let us remember the families that will lose their homes and their possessions, and when we speak about sea-level rises, let us remember the bonds of family, community and nationhood that will be irreversibly broken.

Last November, the Maldives convened a meeting to address those issues, which concluded with the adoption of the Male' Declaration on the Human Dimension of Global Climate Change. We will continue to pursue that approach in the coming years. When building public support, we must be conscious of the need to reconcile climate protection with sustainable development. As concerns grow about the health of the global economy, there is an urgent need to demonstrate that investment in clean energy, environmental technologies, innovation and efficient infrastructure will contribute to climate stabilization, create new and better jobs and opportunities, and have a lasting impact on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In that regard, United Nations agencies have an important role to play in funding for technology transfer, adaptation and the exchange of best practices.

Finally, the chronic lack of adaptive capacity, including financial, technical and institutional resources, means that developing countries, including the least developed countries and low-lying small island States, are ill prepared to deal with climate impacts. Operationalizing the Adaptation Fund in Bali was an important beginning, but far more needs to be done.

For the people of the Maldives — which is among the countries most vulnerable to mounting climate change threats — dealing with climate change and associated sea-level rise is an everyday fact of life. Over the past two decades, we have witnessed first hand the practical realities of climate change. Over 60 per cent of inhabited islands in the Maldives are facing varying degrees of coastal erosion, which is physically threatening the human settlements on our islands.

In Bali, we created a process to address the climate crisis. Bali also delivered a number of agreements beyond launching a process towards a future climate change deal. Maldives is committed to working together with all nations to make the Bali Road Map a success.

I would like to express gratitude to Mayors Bloomberg of New York City and Moratti of Milan, and to many others, for their important contributions to addressing climate change. We are very encouraged by that growing partnership to stabilize climate change. We are equally confident that integrated, coordinated and selfless partnership can save our planet for us and for future generations.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Luciano de Castro, Minister of the Coordination of Environmental Action of Mozambique.

Mr. De Castro (Mozambique) (*spoke in Portuguese; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): At the outset, I would like, on behalf of the Government of Mozambique and on my own behalf, to congratulate the President of the General Assembly on holding this timely debate on climate change. Allow me also to express our appreciation for the Secretary-General's efforts to keep the issue of climate change at the top of the international political agenda.

We associate ourselves with the statements made by the delegations of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; Bangladesh on behalf of the group of the least developed countries; and Cameroon on behalf of the African Group.

This debate is taking place at a crucial time. Just two months ago, the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and to the Kyoto Protocol adopted the Bali Action Plan, which will serve as a basis for identifying long-term cooperation actions for the effective and sustainable implementation of the Convention. That demonstrates that climate change is a global issue the solution of which requires the strengthening of international cooperation action with a view to fulfilling the needs for adaptation and mitigation, development and technology transfer, and the mobilization of the necessary and sufficient funding for the implementation of capacity-building programmes designed to deal with the consequences of global warming.

Mozambique sees this debate as a way of fulfilling the United Nations pledge to encourage its Member States to maintain the political momentum reached in Bali in order to accelerate the process of negotiations taking place within the framework of the Convention and its Protocol with a view to achieving concrete results within the agreed-upon time frame, that is, by 2009.

We already have the available information and the required means to jointly face the challenges of mitigating the consequences of climate change. The latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is very detailed in that respect. It indicates the levels of emissions that can be adopted and the corresponding increase in average temperature for each level of reduction to be adopted, as well as the resulting consequences.

Every year, Mozambique is hit by drought, floods and tropical cyclones. As we speak, the central region of the country is being devastated by flooding and, as a result, as of 31 January there were eight fatalities and approximately 95,000 people affected, and more than 290 thousand acres of varied crops, 21,326 homes, 468 school rooms and 119 wells destroyed.

Those figures refer to this year alone. In addition, we are suffering the consequences of last year's floods, with an ongoing process of recovery and resettlement of the affected communities. As all can see, the occurrence of such cyclical incidents in Mozambique has hampered the Government's efforts towards the social and economic development of the country and poverty reduction, thus constraining the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Government of Mozambique has made efforts to approach those disaster situations by integrating the issue of climate change into its national development policies, strategies and programmes. Mozambique has adopted relevant related strategic work instruments, such as a land reform policy and law, a master plan for the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters, a sustainable development environmental strategy, an integrated management strategy for water resources and a national action plan for adaptation to climate change. Also under way is the preparation of a national strategy for new and renewable energy sources, and a biofuels and environmental action plan under the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The drafting of those and other documents involved Government research institutions, the private sector and civil society. Those instruments will contribute to capacity-building for the improvement of the quality of life of the Mozambican people.

In conclusion, we reiterate our commitment to the United Nations global agenda, in particular the Bali Action Plan. We believe that only by joining efforts will we be able to minimize the impact of climate change. The world will never win the battle if we squander this opportunity.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Kwadwo Adjei-Darko, Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment of Ghana.

Mr. Adjei-Darko (Ghana): To begin with, my delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda.

The year 2007 has gone down in history as a year that saw unprecedented action on the issue of climate change. This week's meeting should further help to maintain the momentum that was generated in 2007.

The Bali Action Plan identifies four main building blocks that need to be considered in any future international agreement on climate change: enhanced national and international action on mitigation of climate change; enhanced action on adaptation; enhanced action on technology development and transfer to support action on mitigation and adaptation; and enhanced action on the provision of financial resources and investments to support actions on mitigation and adaptation and technology cooperation.

It has become increasingly apparent that multilateralism, with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at the forefront, is the surest way to address the climate change challenge, which has such a global dimension. The United Nations system should therefore develop strategic objectives to promote the development of national and international policies that support the effective implementation of those four building blocks for future agreement on climate change. The United Nations agencies can work with national Governments in mainstreaming climate change into development planning, as well as into national decentralization processes.

Currently, the Office of the United Nations Development Programme in Ghana, as part of its annual work programme for 2008, is working with the Ghana Government to disseminate the *Human Development Report 2007/2008*, which has climate change as its theme, with a view to, inter alia, raising awareness both at the community and the highest political levels and to supporting Ghana's Government in implementing concrete adaptation programmes in seven selected pilot districts in the country. This concrete example demonstrates how the United Nations system, including its agencies, can assist Member States in addressing mitigation actions and policies and in scaling up support for adaptation efforts at the national level.

The United Nations system could take concrete action in moving from talk about technology to actual deployment and transfer of climate-friendly technologies to developing countries. It could do so by initiating an international agreement on the development and transfer of technology under the existing United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to ensure, inter alia, the implementation of technology needs identified through country-driven processes, the implementation of joint research and development programmes and activities in the development of new technologies, the implementation of technology development and transfer demonstration projects, the creation of an enabling environment for technology development and transfer and the promotion of North-South and South-South cooperation.

The Government of Ghana stands ready to actively engage in the discussion of future international agreements to address the threats climate change poses to sustainable development, including the devastating impacts of climate change on Governments' efforts to reduce poverty.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Diekumpuna Sita José, Minister of Urbanism and Environment of Angola.

Mr. Sita José (Angola) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Government of Angola, allow me to congratulate the Secretary-General and all the organizations of the United Nations system on the activities being intensively carried out in connection with climate change.

Angola aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, as well as that which will be made by Bangladesh on behalf of the group of least developed countries.

During the Bali summit, the Secretary-General reaffirmed that fighting global warming is the principal moral challenge for our generation. Well before that, our heads of State and Government gathered in this magnificent auditorium in September 2007 to support this idea and launch an appeal that expressed the will to assume a multilateral commitment on global warming under the aegis of the United Nations system.

The fourth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirms that human activities are unequivocally the cause of global warming and recommends that we act as a matter of urgency. Observing the effects of climate change does not reveal a bright future for humankind, particularly in the small island States and least developed countries.

We must all consider that we do not have the right to transfer to future generations the sad legacy associated with the warming of the planet.

In the case of African countries, in spite of their miniscule contribution to the emission of greenhouse gases, the effects of climate change on their economies are already evident. Many African counties are severely affected by drought and desertification. We are already witnessing the serious damage caused by drastic changes in precipitation patterns. These disruptions penalize populations that are already needy and hamper the implementation of food security programmes as well as programmes for the alleviation of poverty, all of which are designed to complement efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

In Bali, we took the first steps towards a new comprehensive climate agreement on the lowest greenhouse gas emissions compatible with economic growth. The next steps to be taken must address the effective operationalization of the Adaptation Fund and other financing mechanisms, as well as encourage international cooperation that is able to respond to the major challenges imposed by climate change.

We have full confidence in the capacity of the United Nations system to confront the main challenges posed by climate change. That is why we have come here today to express our commitment to the desired and indispensable collective efforts for the best possible outcome to the successful negotiation of a general comprehensive post-2012 agreement before the end of 2009, on the basis of the Bali Road Map.

Recognizing that all parties must contribute in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, Angola, a country which has been living in peace for the past six years but which is engaged in a difficult process of national reconstruction, will do its best to encourage and mobilize all private and public actors, non-governmental organizations and local communities to participate in the implementation of the national strategy prepared in accordance with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. This strategy was announced here in September 2007 by José Eduardo dos Santos, President of the Republic of Angola.

The partners of our Government are called upon to adhere to multisectoral measures and programmes, including actions in such areas as renewable energy production, rail transport, preservation of primary forests and creation of forested preserves, the use of clean technologies in industry and the oil sector, which has been trying for a long time to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions associated with oil production.

To enable the least developed countries, such as ours, to participate effectively in the collective efforts of mitigation and adaptation, it is imperative for the United Nations system to give priority assistance to national and regional initiatives that are aimed at: first, developing capacities for ongoing observation and systemic analysis of the effects of climate change; secondly, assisting the development of local early warning systems and plans for the prevention of natural risks; thirdly, encouraging sustainable tropical forestry and combating deforestation; fourthly, ensuring access to clean technologies; and, finally, improving access to available financing through the United Nations system, it being hoped that additional funds will be forthcoming to this end.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Ahmed Nihar, Minister of Environment and Urban Development of the Sudan.

Mr. Nihar (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I commend you, Sir, for presiding over this important thematic debate which undoubtedly addresses one of the greatest challenges that the world

faces today, namely, climate change. I wish to express our appreciation for your initiative in arranging a continuation of our debate on this subject. We are grateful to you and the Secretary-General for taking a personal interest in climate change.

We align ourselves with the statements made by the Group of 77 and China, the African Group and the least developed countries (LDCs) and, lastly, with the statement to be given by the Arab Group.

We gather here today following the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which took place in Bali, Indonesia, and served as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. We consider the session to have been successful and hope that the road map it produced will expedite efforts to implement international commitments to combating climate change.

Given its geographical location, vast area, biological diversity and development situation, the Sudan is one of the countries most affected by climate change and most vulnerable to it, both now and in the foreseeable future. This is why we attach such importance to being able to adapt to the negative impacts of climate change and to adopt ways of mitigating its effects on our national development.

The Sudan has therefore devised a national programme of adaptation to climate change which includes urgent measures aimed at combating poverty, ensuring food security, supplying water, providing health care, and reducing deforestation and desertification. In addition, this programme includes recommendations for establishing institutional policies and frameworks so that we can then implement the adaptation measures.

We have presented an implementation strategy to the UNFCCC secretariat. We hope that it will be financed by the funds established within the framework of the UNFCCC and by all those who support developing countries in their efforts to combat climate change.

We believe that international solidarity and effective participation are highly important in addressing climate change. Although we have not contributed significantly to the emission of greenhouse gases, we have taken steps and adopted policies to reduce their emission. In the field of energy, we have introduced measures to enhance the provision of energy for sustainable development. We have taken steps to ensure a balanced policy in the production and use of oil for sustainable development, while giving much thought to the protection of the environment.

The Ministry of Energy and Mining has passed a law on environmental protection in the oil industry. The Government has also taken some significant steps to promote the use of renewable, clean energy, such as solar energy. The Sudan has made strides in the use of hydroelectric energy through cooperation with the Nile Basin Countries and a power trading programme, in addition to implementing land and forest rehabilitation and reclamation and action to combat deforestation.

We welcome the decisions adopted in Bali, in particular with respect to the honouring of commitments and time frames in order to create a sustainable system aimed at reducing the catastrophic effects of climate change on developing countries and especially on LDCs and States in Africa. We are concerned by the fourth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which states that certain levels of climate change are inevitable, even if we commit ourselves to drastic measures to reduce emissions, owing to the existing accumulation of greenhouse gas emissions and the time frame required to reduce the current level of those emissions.

The crux of the matter is that the most vulnerable countries will bear the burden of inevitable climate change. This will mean more disasters, reduced economic and social development capabilities and more conflicts over scarce resources.

The Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC clearly indicates that adaptation is our only option. We therefore believe that any future agreement should include clearer and more specific commitments designed to support the efforts of affected countries in Africa and the least developed countries to adapt to climate change. To ensure the effective honouring of these commitments, the establishment of active institutional frameworks and mechanisms should be included. Enough conferences have been held. Now it is time to face the real challenge: that of implementing.

We much appreciate the decisions adopted in Bali for the implementation of the agreement and the Protocol, especially the activation of the Adaptation Fund. We hope that this Fund will make possible the

direct implementation of specific projects that enable us to adapt effectively and urgently to climate change.

We also hope that there will be action in developing countries to combat deforestation, which affects livelihoods in poor countries. We expect measures of a practical nature to be undertaken in this regard.

As to the development of technologies and technology transfer, which are very important in combating climate change, we believe that they can be achieved only by addressing the main and fundamental constraints impeding follow-up to the commitments contained in the agreement, which persist despite the fact that ten years have elapsed since entry into force of this agreement.

We appreciate the increasing role played by various United Nations bodies in mobilizing resources and establishing frameworks and agreements in order to address the problems that affect all humanity in an effective, equitable and impartial manner. We regard the UNFCCC as the main legal framework for addressing climate change, in accordance with the Rio principles and on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities and the three main pillars of sustainable development: economic growth, social development and protection of the environment.

We hope that the necessary resources will be made available to the African countries and the LDCs in their adaptation efforts. We believe that adaptation to climate change makes it incumbent on the developed countries — which are chiefly responsible for producing high levels of greenhouse gas emissions — and on this international Organization to create appropriate policy and institutional frameworks and to provide urgent, direct and predictable support to developing countries, so that they can adapt to the inevitable occurrences of climate change. Here, we would like to reiterate the importance of implementation.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jean-Marie Claude Germain, Minister of Environment of Haiti.

Mr. Germain (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): I am pleased to take the floor in this debate on the theme: "Addressing climate change: the United Nations and the world at work".

Allow me, first of all, to sincerely thank the President of the General Assembly for this initiative and for the invitation to participate in this meeting. I wish him every success in achieving this noble task.

Haiti fully aligns itself with the statement made by the Group of 77 and China and is gratified by the renewed interest accorded to global problems. We welcome the long-term choice of the international community to act on the basis of reality rather than illusion and approximation. In view of the cause and effect duality of climate change, we are fully convinced that we are already involved in an unprecedented global crisis.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) entered into force in 1994, and the successive scientific evaluations have indisputably confirmed that human activity modifies the atmosphere. This fact is also set out in the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Expected population growth in the next decade and the demographic pressure of certain regions add a particularly disconcerting dimension to this problem. Furthermore, it is the populations of the small island developing States, those most vulnerable and least responsible for these severe climate changes, which will unjustly pay the price for them.

We now know that there is no way to rid ourselves of greenhouse gas emissions. We also know that, even if we were to put an end to all greenhouse gas emissions today, the ensuing climate changes would not be felt for decades because of the atmospheric lifetime of carbon dioxide.

The only path left to us is that of proportionally reducing greenhouse gas emissions, according to the common but differentiated responsibilities principle.

Today, Haiti, like the other small island developing States, is confronted by a number of internal challenges connected to climate change which dangerously threaten economic, social and environmental conditions and, consequently, limit its ability to reduce poverty and realize its sustainable development objectives.

Because of its geographical location, Haiti, like many neighbouring Caribbean countries, is every year susceptible to tropical storms and other meteorological threats, which may very well be made worse by climate

change in the decades to come. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Haiti is the most vulnerable of all Latin American and Caribbean countries. Furthermore, it has the least resilience to weather the environmental shocks and stresses resulting from natural disasters and risks and accentuated by climate change. Haiti experienced a host of natural disasters during the twentieth century — disasters which cost the lives of thousands and were responsible for millions of dollars worth of material damage.

Almost all small island developing States, in particular the Republic of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, forming the island of Quisqueya, are becoming more vulnerable. Every year, these two States suffer natural disasters. Their financial resources, instead of being dedicated to building social infrastructure and to productive and profitable activities in the context of development, are allocated to repairing the resulting environmental damage.

At this very moment, one of the border ports engaged in busy trade between Haiti and the Dominican Republic is in the process of becoming defunct; a shared means of international communication is progressively deteriorating because of the flooding and overflowing of one of the biggest frontier lakes, Lake Azuéï.

The most recent damage in the two countries, caused by tropical storm Noël, clearly showed how an event, even a moderate one, can produce significant macroeconomic effects and constitute an additional factor delaying achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

As His Excellency, Mr. René Garcia Preval emphasized in his statement on 24 September 2007 at the meeting of Heads of State on Climate Change in the General Assembly Hall:

> "no matter requires a more urgent response on the part of the international community than climate change which undoubtedly represents the most important environmental issue of our day and presents the most disturbing challenge to world development".

In accordance with this vision, Haiti, after signing and ratifying the Convention on Climate Change, prepared a National Plan of Action for Adaptation to Climate Change composed of a number of multisectoral projects growing out of national dialogue, took on additional commitments to the international community by signing and ratifying other relevant multilateral agreements, including the Kyoto Protocol, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification.

Haiti is also in the process of setting up a designated national authority as a guarantee of its commitment to the Kyoto Protocol.

Aware of the decisive importance of climate monitoring and forecasting in order to protect people and property, Haiti has set up a National Environment Vulnerability Observatory. This will make it possible for us to have reliable and pertinent data, increase our adaptability and integrate climate data and forecasts into evaluation and decision-making processes so as to derive as much benefit as possible in socio-economic terms.

Similarly, and by way of adaptation measures, the Haitian Government has just, among other activities, promoted a trilateral accord with Cuba and the Dominican Republic which lays the foundation for the creation of a biological corridor on land and sea. This pioneering Caribbean initiative, which is strongly supported by the regional branch of the United Nations Environment Programme, will make it possible to place humankind at the centre of concerns and activities, thereby reducing poverty, preserving biodiversity, providing goods and services to the populations of these three countries and ensuring the survival of vulnerable ecosystems which are sensitive to climate change.

Today, there is a growing awareness of climate change. The weather has validated the conclusions of the fourth assessment report of the IPCC and there are many more of us who share the same diagnosis.

What we now have to do is to come together to serve the main cause, which is to protect and save lives. I continue to believe that the impact of climate change and climate variation on human activity and ecosystems presents considerable challenges with respect to sustainable development.

The situation of Haiti, like that of most of the small island developing States, clearly illustrates the interdependence of climate change, poverty, natural

risks and disasters, desertification and the loss of biodiversity.

I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to the international community to further intensify as a matter of urgency its support for the efforts of small island developing States, which it has recognized as being particularly fragile and vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Michael Kaingu, Minister of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources of Zambia.

Mr. Kaingu (Zambia): I am very grateful for the opportunity to participate in this very important debate on climate change, and I commend the organizers of this important event.

We may all recall that the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change unambiguously established the facts of global warming and showcased the perceptible signs of the changing climate in various locations in the world. The projected increases — up to 5.8 Celsius degrees by the year 2100 in some scenarios — are estimated to be up to 100 times faster than some of the other major spikes in temperature in the history of the Earth.

Reports also stress that this global warming will increasingly affect human and natural systems and will have potentially disastrous effects on local, regional and global economies. The economic impacts of climate change will likely be unevenly distributed across regions and within economies and societies, with secondary effects including higher prices, reduced income and job losses. These will outweigh benefits for most sectors that provide essential goods and services to society, and will place immense strain on the public sector.

Poor countries like Zambia will suffer most, because we do not have the capacity to face the impacts of climate change. Our predominant concerns relate to the alleviation of poverty, which overshadows issues of climate change. As I address the Assembly now, Zambia is experiencing unprecedented floods that are wreaking havoc, displacing people and washing away bridges, culverts and roads.

Today, I wish to share with the Assembly what my Government is doing in trying to address climate change and other challenges that we face. My Government signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on 11 June 1992 and ratified it on 28 May 1993. Also, we signed the Kyoto Protocol on 5 August 1998 and ratified it on 7 July 2006.

Although Zambia does not have a specific policy on climate change, our fifth national development plan recognizes climate change as a challenge. The fifth national development plan forecasts that climate change may reduce rainfall between 8 and 30 per cent and advocates measures that address this challenge.

The issue of climate change is also provided for in our recently approved national policy on environment. Furthermore, climate change is well articulated in other environmental sector programmes. In this regard, the following activities have been undertaken by my Government. I would like to thank and commend the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility for giving us support in this regard.

Zambia's initial national communication was completed and submitted to the UNFCCC in 2006. The two-year formulation of the second national communication was initiated in 2007. In addition to reporting on the progress of UNFCCC implementation, the second communication process will also serve as a management tool, indicating the gaps in current national capacity to address the issue of climate change management.

The National Adaptation Programme of Action was submitted to the UNFCCC secretariat in 2007. The National Adaptation Programme of Action specifically addresses immediate pressing adaptation priorities in food security and public health. The Programme also points out that there is evidence of climate change affecting other sectors, such as forests, wildlife, land management, energy and tourism. We are now in need of resources to implement the Programme of Action.

A national authority designated to approve Clean Development Mechanism projects has been established, formed by an ad hoc board of the most relevant national stakeholders in the Mechanism process and hosted by the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources.

In line with the commitments stemming from UNFCCC membership, my Government has also undertaken a comprehensive national climate change

awareness campaign, the objective of which is to ensure national ownership and the success of future climate change-related efforts, through sensitization and national consensus-building.

The national capacity self-assessment for the implementation of the Rio Convention was completed by the UNFCCC focal point in 2007. The assessment identifies the gaps in national capacity for the effective implementation of the United Nations Conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification, and proposes a strategy and an action plan to address those gaps.

A study of the economic impact of climate change in Zambia, with support from UNDP, will commence soon. Rigorous analysis has demonstrated that climate change is of critical importance to the short-, medium- and long-term development priorities for Zambia as set forth in the fifth national development plan.

My Government has also documented a national implementation plan for the management of persistent organic pollutants pursuant to the Stockholm Convention, which sets out to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants. This document was completed in April 2007.

This forum provides us with an opportunity to participate in promoting partnerships and consider the most appropriate approach for the United Nations and the world at large to take to address climate change, in order to ease the impacts that will be exerted on countries like Zambia and to forestall the reversal of developmental gains that may arise as a result of climate change.

In conclusion, let me emphasize the importance of early action in addressing the threat of climate change. We need to address the root cause of this problem by taking decisive action at the global level to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Lufter Xhuveli, Minister of the Environment, Forests and Water Administration of Albania.

Mr. Xhuveli (Albania): It is my special pleasure to participate in this important thematic debate, which focuses on global climate change, one of today's most challenging and threatening issues for humanity. I would like to thank the United Nations for organizing this very important debate.

Climate change is a complex and serious threat. It has been shown that climate change arises mostly from unsustainable development — unsustainable energy production, unsustainable energy consumption, unsustainable industrial development, unsustainable land use, unsustainable lifestyles, et cetera. The experience of responding to the climate change threat is fundamentally linked to concerns of sustainable development, vulnerability and adaptation, the economy and poverty reduction.

Albania joined the countries that gathered in New York under the leadership of the Secretary-General to call for a breakthrough to be reached in Bali. We went to Bali with the aim of offering our modest contribution to make that breakthrough happen. We are here today to follow up on the real breakthrough achieved in the climate change negotiations last December, thanks to the historic attention and support that was focused on the issue in the course of last year.

While bearing very little responsibility for global greenhouse gas emissions, Albania is bearing the majority of the environmental, social and economic consequences of climate change, as is the majority of the developing world. Despite its relatively small carbon footprint, due to its heavy reliance on hydropower, Albania, like the rest of the world, is significantly affected by climate change, with increased temperatures, less precipitation and other consequences.

Albania's needs for adaptation to face climate changes are significant and diverse. They touch upon sectors including tourism, coastal areas, agriculture and ecosystems. Governmental programmes will have to respond to the consequences of climate change and address climate change risk in its national and local development plans.

The Government of Albania is committed to fulfilling all its obligations arising from the global United Nations conventions, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. From this point of view, we consider the role of the United Nations to be that of a catalyst in leading and supporting efforts to mitigate climate change, not only at the international level but also at the national level.

Albania is implementing a programme of activities aimed at reducing the growth rate of greenhouse gas emissions, adapting to the negative impacts of climate change and enabling carbon financing mechanisms under the coordination of and with support provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Albanian Government has voluntarily joined the One United Nations Initiative, which provides new opportunities for addressing, inter alia, global environmental issues, specifically climate change, through the application of new approaches and new forms of partnership.

Although Albania has no reduction commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, we are nevertheless aiming to promote the sustainable growth of its economy. We are aware that energy is a prerequisite to achieve that goal. In Albania's circumstances, that is a clear challenge that brings together two important concerns: energy security and climate change. Through its fiscal policies, the promotion of renewable energy sources and the operationalization of its institutions dealing with carbon finance mechanisms, Albania seeks to achieve a carbon-neutral economy. It has also increased its capacities to take advantage of and benefit from the very dynamic and emerging carbon market. The role and support of the United Nations has been significant, indeed crucial, in that direction.

There is potential in Albania for the cost-effective reduction of greenhouse gas emissions which are generated by outdated and inefficient energy consumption and the relative failure to exploit sources of renewable energy. Developed countries have shown great interest in reducing emissions in return for carbon credits from the Albanian energy and forests sectors. The Government of Albania's positive response to this interest has already led to the signing of the first emission reduction purchase agreement, between the Government of Albania and the BioCarbon Fund of the World Bank, and two other cooperation agreements with the Governments of Italy and Denmark.

In 2007 alone, the Albanian Government has supported investments in about 50 small hydropower plants, and it will continue to do so in the years to come. Also, taking advantage of favourable environmental conditions, the production of about 1,000 megawatts of power from wind farms will soon become a reality. At the same time, we are implementing policies that aim at reducing forest exploitation along with the forestation and reforestation of vast areas of the country.

As it pursues development, Albania will continue to maintain its low level of greenhouse gas emissions. In this way, we are providing our modest contribution to saving our planet from climate change. Albania considers the climate change challenge to be an opportunity to address mitigation and adaptation actions in the context of sustainable development.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Ligia Castro, Administrator General of the National Authority of Environment of Panama.

Ms. Castro (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Climate change is a fact, as is our vulnerability and the need for us to adapt. In our countries, extreme climate events have been recorded, with the loss of human life and serious material damage which perpetuate and exacerbate poverty and require immediate responses with alternatives for a dignified life for our people.

Today we are suffering because of the inaction of those who came before us and their ignorance of the existence of climate change. But today we are aware of what is happening. Hence the urgency to move from dialogue to action, in order to ensure that future generations do not have to pay the price of our failure to act in time, knowing that this change exists.

Are we vulnerable? Yes, we know that. Do we have to plan sustainable development? That, too, we know. Do we have to adapt, because we cannot control climate change? We know that, too. Do we have to mitigate greenhouse gases? There is no doubt about that either. But all of this comes at a price, and the cost is higher for the developing countries. Our vulnerability grows faster than our capacity to adapt.

That is why this debate is key, because, today, action is being defined that could change the behaviours of our societies that have brought about the current climate conditions. For that, what is needed is more than the political will of Governments; what is needed is to make private enterprises, trade unions, professional organizations and political parties aware, so that they understand that if they fulfil environmental standards in each country and invest in new clean, efficient technology, ultimately we will together be able, in an alliance with the rest of society, to begin building sustainable development in our countries.

We wish to stress the responsibility of the developed countries which, on the basis of the principle of shared but differentiated responsibility, should increase their efforts and carry out responsible policies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, considering the opportunities outlined in the Kyoto Protocol, which was the first step agreed to by the international community to reduce greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. Also, they must support adaptation initiatives in the framework of the Climate Change Convention.

The international carbon market has created great expectations for the developing countries, and Panama is placing its hopes in this market to achieve financial flows directed towards alleviating the problem of extreme poverty and is comprehensively analysing the problem from the social, economic and cultural perspectives. We will do this through direct investment, in communities that are located near projects, of 30 per cent of income from carbon credits in social and environmental projects, as decided in each case by Panama's communities and local governments. Furthermore, we have created an annual fund whereby, for each megawatt generated by power plants, $5,000 are provided for services related to drinking water, energy, improved living conditions, bio-digester sanitation that allows cooking without firewood, and other kinds of necessary social infrastructure.

The United Nations and its Member States must energize financial flows to address climate change unequivocally so as to support each and every effort made by countries like ours to mitigate its effects, both through the transfer of technology and through the promotion of renewable energy and efficient energy production. For a small country we are making a great effort, but we feel that those who are truly responsible must fulfil their duty to improve our capacity to adapt.

Panama has been following the issue of reducing emissions from deforestation and land degradation. Many efforts have been made in the past, but the results have not been encouraging. The deforestation rate in our country is high and will continue to rise unless major efforts and investments are made to lower it. However, the problem is quite complex and requires major investments.

The Bali Road Map provides clear directions in that regard, and we call for the cooperation of all in order to reach agreement and halt the process, which will not only reduce carbon dioxide emissions, but will also help to achieve the true sustainable development of communities that today have no means of generating income but which are also the most vulnerable communities of our countries. Only in that way will they be able to adapt.

Teamwork is key to achieving the goals set out in the Bali Road Map, the agenda of which also includes issues to be negotiated by the end of 2009 to establish guidelines concerning the commitments to be undertaken by the end of 2012, which marks the final date of the first commitment period.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations A/62/PV.81

General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

81st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 12 February 2008, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Thematic debate entitled "Addressing climate change: The United Nations and the world at work"

Agenda items 48, 54 and 116 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Sustainable development

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/644)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Morocco, His Excellency Mr. Abdelkbir Zahoud, State Secretary in charge of Water and the Environment.

Mr. Zahoud (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco and on my own behalf, I would like, at the outset, to warmly thank the President of the General Assembly for having invited us to participate in this high-level thematic debate on climate change. The invitation to this debate two months after the Conference of the Parties in Bali reaffirms the will and determination of the General Assembly to participate in activating the Bali Road Map. The Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reveals that these climate changes are now part of our daily landscape. The increasing frequency of certain climate and meteorological phenomena, especially droughts and floods, is of particular concern.

The effects of climate change are of concern to the international community, and in particular to the African continent, which has experienced the most detrimental consequences. This should be the focus of particular attention in order to draw up realistic adaptation plans, while assessing the capacities of countries, ensuring exchanges of technology and providing the financial resources necessary to combat climate change.

We believe that adaptation requires information and awareness programmes, and economic mechanisms to enable our countries to effectively manage climate change in order to meet the challenge posed by phenomena such as floods and drought and by other possible crises. Among measures to help African countries overcome these obstacles are the following. The first is the establishment of observation and early warning systems to monitor climate developments on a daily, monthly, seasonal and long-range basis, so as to strengthen early action capacities. Secondly, we must put in place well-adapted socio-economic methods and machinery, particularly in the fields of agriculture, energy and water resources. Thirdly, steps should be taken to protect natural resources and avoid shortages by adopting a policy of conservation and rationalization of our natural resources, combating pollution, and seeking new sources of energy,

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consistent with the requirements of sustainable development.

The following are some of the objectives we and other African countries have set for ourselves in the field of adaptation and mitigation, on which we need the support of the United Nations. Adaptation to climate change requires additional financial resources, which places a burden on ecologically fragile countries such as Morocco. Such countries can develop national programmes in the fields of forestation, combating desertification and the development of renewable energy resources and can give priority to efficient energy sources. We have to strengthen the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, particularly its provisions dealing with adaptation and mitigation. At the same time, we have to be aware of the international and institutional balances that need to be struck to mitigate climate change.

We call on United Nations institutions and organs to give priority to programmes and projects that can help to offset the effects of climate change. We also call on other relevant parties to engage in monitoring, observation, and prediction activities, and to draw up strategies for prevention, while improving the effectiveness of adaptation and mitigation methods. The entire international community should participate in this effort. Furthermore, concerted efforts must be made to provide developing countries with the necessary financial resources so that they can benefit as much as possible from what is currently being done internationally, particularly by the United Nations.

The United Nations can play a very positive role in transferring clean technology and intellectual property systems to the countries of the South, through practical measures that would enable them to effect sustainable development in line with Millennium Development Goals. The multi-party fund set up in this connection for the benefit of developing countries is a positive step. Optimal use should also be made of existing mechanisms, and exchanges of experience should be enhanced so that developing countries can take full advantage of such exchanges.

As far as financing and the mobilization of resources is concerned, the United Nations has been making considerable efforts to meet development needs and has designed effective programmes for that purpose. Climate change have become an international problem, and it is thus up to us all to build stronger solidarity in order to preserve our world for future generations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jan Dusik, Deputy Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Dusik (Czech Republic): Let me express my deep appreciation to the President of the General Assembly, Srgjan Kerim, for the opportunity to contribute to this important debate addressing the worldwide issue of climate change.

The Czech Republic, sharing as it does the European Union (EU) commitment to climate change mitigation, fully supports the statement made by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union.

The Bali Conference demonstrated that cooperation, partnership and dialogue are crucial aspects in tackling climate change. The Bali Action Plan and its important building blocks — shared vision, mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and financial flows — were successfully agreed upon. Furthermore, the time frame for completion of an agreement for the post-2012 period was set. All of those partial steps towards a final agreement are necessary in the whole overall process of finding a solution to this complex topic. As Bali showed, future agreement on the post-Kyoto regime is very challenging, but can nevertheless be reached in 2009 in Copenhagen.

The Czech Republic is ready to take an active part in the forthcoming international negotiations, as a EU member State and as one of the countries holding the EU presidency during the decisive negotiation period. We expect that all of the main building blocks will be deliberated upon and will be covered by the post-2012 agreement.

In the mitigation area, the important specific evidence from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) should be reflected, and information should be promoted in order to ensure fair sharing of mitigation efforts in the Copenhagen agreement. The role of the carbon market as a main mitigation and financial tool ought to be enhanced. A lot of work needs to be done in preparation and implementation of adaptation policies and measures, especially in the small island developing States and least developed

countries, which are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Enhanced action on technology development and transfer in order to support action on mitigation and adaptation is crucial. In this context, all financial instruments established under the Convention should be made operational as soon as possible.

The Czech Republic supports the efforts of the United Nations and calls for the strengthening of the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the only forum where legally binding decisions are taken. We recognize the importance of the whole United Nations system. At the global, regional and national levels, many United Nations organizations are currently undertaking climate change activities such as monitoring, scientific research, reporting, capacity-building, technology transfer and financing.

Furthermore, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) should set combating climate change as one of the priorities within the medium-term strategy 2010-2013. It devoted the tenth special session of the UNEP Governing Council to a thematic discussion on mobilizing finance to meet the climate challenge. However, we are of the view that in order to ensure complementarity rather than duplication in United Nations activities, the development of an effective framework for greater coherence and coordination of the work of the United Nations system is needed.

Let me recall that many of the UNFCCC parties are also parties to other global multilateral environmental agreements, such as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol.

The promotion of a synergistic approach to the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, as well as to the facilitation of activities undertaken by the relevant secretariats, could be seen as a new challenge for the United Nations system, needed for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Czech Republic fully subscribes to the Millennium Development Goals and is prepared to contribute towards their achievement within its capacities by multiple means and in line with its strategy for Czech development assistance.

International cooperation is required to put ourselves on a path to slow, stop and reverse the growth of greenhouse gas emissions. Donor and recipient countries and institutions should follow an integrated approach and promote synergies among all financial instruments in order to secure the most efficient implementation of the effort to combat climate change.

We strongly believe that coordinated actions at the United Nations level will promote more coherent and systematic work at the national level. Those both together are the preconditions for our common goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address the negative impacts of climate change.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. El-Sayed Ramzi Ezz el-Dein Ramzi, Assistant Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs and International Cooperation of Egypt.

Mr. Ramzi (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure at the outset to extend my thanks and greetings to the President of the General Assembly and to the Secretary-General for the great attention they have focused on the issue of sustainable development, including, inter alia, the question of climate change, which has become the top priority on the international agenda. That has been reflected in the convening of the high-level meeting on climate change in September 2007 and of the current meeting to discuss the role that could be played by the United Nations system pursuant to the mandates assigned to it by Member States, including support for partnerships between Governments and the private sector.

Our position is based on our conviction of the seriousness of the issue. Egypt — particularly its delta, its Mediterranean coast, and the city of Alexandria — represents one of the most vulnerable countries threatened by climate change, which is borne out by scientific evidence, in particular the outcome of the fourth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

We also believe that the outcome of the Bali Conference and its aftermath should be studied carefully, particularly the reference to the voluntary responsibility of all developing countries in mitigation, which has added a new dimension to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In that context, I should like to reiterate the statement made by the Egyptian delegation at the

closing meeting in Bali to the effect that our interpretation of such responsibilities should be understood in the context of the fact that there are different levels of development within the developing countries. We therefore call for the inclusion of the criterion of income level and growth in the issue of climate change with its two dimensions, mitigation and adaptation.

From a conceptual point of view, we believe it is useful to address the ongoing negotiations under the Framework Convention on the basis of its two main areas — adaptation and mitigation — in terms of criteria and impact, as well as both the qualitative and quantitative dimensions in an equal and balanced way. For example, the quantitative dimension in the mitigation area is reflected in the volume of emissions, whereas adaptation is reflected in the size of the population affected by climate change and the extent of damage to a country. On the other hand, the qualitative dimension in mitigation is seen in the type of emissions, the means of reducing them, and the mechanisms able to furnish alternatives to fossil fuels, such as new and renewable energy, the role of clean technology, and the funding needed in light of private sector ownership. In mitigation, however, the qualitative aspect is reflected in vulnerability and its impact.

In that context, I would like to echo once again the statement made by the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, at the high-level event in September 2007, in which he called for the submission of a list of the most vulnerable countries affected by climate change. We have been pleased to learn that the United Nations is convening a meeting to discuss that issue this year and that the proposal was reiterated by the island States in Bali later in 2007. In addition to the foregoing, we call for attention to be focused on countries with deltas threatened by inundation by sea and ocean water in view of the urgency and grave potential impact of that phenomenon on the populations and development of those countries.

That brings us to the content of the documents and rationale of the current meeting, which address international cooperation, priorities, the role of the United Nations, and partnership between Governments and the private sector. It is obvious that technology is one of the most important mechanisms for solving that problem, either through clean technology to reduce emissions or by addressing the consequences of the phenomenon in the context of sustainable development in relation to such issues as water resources, agriculture and others.

It is noted that the United Nations, pursuant to its mandate and as a system that covers all aspects of assistance to Member States in addressing the phenomenon — such as the formulation of plans and the adoption of capacity-building measures — remains idle with respect to mechanisms in the areas of finance and technology transfer, which are still in the hands of the private sector or in forums not bound by United Nations resolutions, in particular the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility and the Adaptation Fund recently established under the UNFCCC. The situation will not allow the system to play an effective and distinct role so long as the status quo is in effect.

We stress our support for partnerships between Governments and all stakeholders in that area, given the importance of that role as a complement of and not a replacement for international cooperation.

We believe in the usefulness and effectiveness of the regional dimension of cooperation. We therefore propose the establishment of mechanisms for financing, including regional funds for adaptation, as well as for technology transfer on a preferential basis, particularly for the most vulnerable countries.

It is important to emphasize a number of principles enshrined in international law and international cooperation in general. Those principles include no harm to others in the implementation of projects or plans at the national and regional levels in the areas of mitigation and adaptation; respect for the concept of State sovereignty, in view of the emergence of the security dimension of climate change; the need to pay equal attention to the nine priorities enshrined in the Framework Convention in the area of adaptation; and the need for attention to the economic dimension of the current trends aimed at cultivating vast areas with grain for the use of biofuels, which contribute to rising grain prices globally. While we support the growing role of the United Nations system in addressing climate change, we caution against the danger of neglecting the roles assigned to it in other areas that make the United Nations a comprehensive forum for multilateral cooperation.

I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his preliminary report, which contains an overview of the activities of United Nations entities on climate

change. We look forward to receiving it in its final form so that Member States can consider its content and determine their position accordingly.

Finally, I would also like to emphasize that the UNFCCC is the only forum for negotiations and that Member States have agreed to mandate it to address the issue before us in all its dimensions. I would also like to emphasize the value of coordination within the United Nations system in that respect in order to avoid repetition, duplication and a waste of resources.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Howard Bamsey, Deputy Secretary of Environment of Australia.

Mr. Bamsey (Australia): On behalf of the Australian Government, I am very pleased to be able to participate in this important debate. In that context, I acknowledge the significance of the statement to be made later today by the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Group of Small Island Developing States, which are among the most vulnerable to climate change.

We are here today because we recognize that climate change is a serious global problem that demands a determined global response. Events such as today's are instrumental in maintaining and strengthening the political momentum and public commitment crucial for responding to the significant challenges posed by climate change. I therefore take this opportunity to thank the President of the General Assembly for his timely initiative.

Just two months ago in Bali, we, the community of nations, demonstrated our strong will to work together to meet those challenges across four broad areas for action. The United Nations system is central to delivering on that mandate. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is and will remain the overarching framework that guides our collective climate change response and within which we will reach a comprehensive agreement next year. But beyond the negotiations, we must also recognize that action at all levels, in all regions and across all sectors and communities is necessary to ensure that our global efforts are successful. That is true also across all parts of the United Nations system.

Notwithstanding the respective mandates and diverse areas of expertise across the United Nations, Australia sees real opportunities for ensuring a more cohesive, system-wide response to climate change in the future. An efficient and effective United Nations response, delivered in collaboration with Member States, the private sector and civil society, is fundamental for implementing existing commitments and delivering on all future agreements.

As confirmed by the Secretary-General's overview provided as background for this debate, the United Nations system is already playing a vital role in leveraging increased investment and financial flows for adaptation and mitigation actions, and in supporting the wide-scale diffusion of low-emission technologies. We must ensure that practical, on-the-ground support provided through the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme and other relevant agencies — in particular support to least developed countries — is well coordinated and does not duplicate efforts or lead to wasted resources. It is imperative that available funding and support be properly targeted and utilized in a manner that maximizes the sustainable development benefits for the regions, countries and local communities in question.

The efforts of national Governments and support from United Nations agencies, while critical, will not be sufficient to meet the challenges at hand. Action by and in collaboration with the private sector, local communities and non-governmental organizations has become an important tool in the fight against climate change, and there are increasingly positive signs that all stakeholders are responding to the challenge.

We have recently seen an explosive proliferation of partnerships in the climate space, including Government with Government, public with private and industry with industry. That phenomenon was confirmed by the sheer number and diversity of those attending Bali and announcing collaborative action, from Government and business to non-governmental and community organizations.

In Australia's experience, the most effective partnerships are likely to be those that are informal and flexible and that facilitate quick action and responsiveness to changing circumstances. At their best, such partnerships can deliver innovation in technology, develop markets for new products and services, and encourage the sharing of knowledge and best practices. For example, in Australia, we have developed innovative new partnerships based on the

designation of "solar cities", often bringing together disparate partners for the first time, to considerable advantage.

Partnerships can allow new approaches to be trialled, mistakes to be made and learned from, and ideas to be cultivated and then, as they mature, brought to larger forums for wider application. We see such partnerships as potentially beneficial in a number of climate-related sectors, for example, in trialling approaches to address deforestation and land degradation, including how such efforts might be supported by market mechanisms.

Among neighbours and friends, partnerships expand understanding and deepen existing relationships. Among countries challenged by climate change, partnerships can foster a collegiate atmosphere that builds cooperation and, crucially, confidence beyond the boundaries of formal diplomacy. Between Governments and business, partnerships can lay the foundation for exciting new enterprises and the development of new and clean technologies. All partners bring with them expertise and take with them a share of the profits of the relationship — capacity, technology, experience and, most importantly, the confidence to act.

The Australian Government and Australian industries are participating actively in a range of international partnerships, including with many countries represented here. We welcome the discussions at this forum about how our collective efforts can support, complement and build on the solid base of action and partnerships already under way.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Vittorio Craxi, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Italy.

Mr. Craxi (Italy) (*spoke in French*): I wish to begin by endorsing the statement delivered by the Slovenian presidency on behalf of the European Union.

Allow me also to thank President Kerim for promoting today's event, which rightly highlights the role of the General Assembly as the supreme representative body of the international community in the fight against climate change. The action of personal advocacy being conducted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is, I believe, extremely important in helping to accelerate negotiations and in mainstreaming climate issues in the United Nations system.

We have now moved from the important phase of public awareness and scientific analysis of the risks being run by the planet to the urgent phase of defining and adopting common regulations, policies and instruments inspired by the principles of efficiency and worldwide solidarity.

The United Nations should be the primary forum for achieving that goal. All the national and regional forums equipped to finding common ground for appropriate policies have a useful contribution to make, but the central position of the United Nations as the multilateral seat for defining the future regime of emissions reduction should be preserved and, indeed, strengthened.

The recent meeting of the United Nations Chief Executives Board and the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations climate change activities are, in my opinion, steps in the right direction. The climate change issue can represent a best practice for coordination within the United Nations system along the lines that we all embrace, under the formula "deliver as one".

Italy believes in the importance of concretely involving the international financial institutions in programmes to fight climate change. Their participation should be targeted mainly at expanding the opportunities offered by appropriate policies to safeguard the environment and the climate as a driver of sustainable development.

The collective response to the challenges of climate change should be strengthened, according to Italy and the European Union, with particular reference to the governance of the environment. The idea at the heart of our assessments is that the environmental sector should be equipped with a forum with a solid scientific and financial footing that would mobilize international momentum and provide political leadership.

Italy also feels that the function performed by the Commission on Sustainable Development is crucial. Together with the General Assembly, it represents the main vehicle for promoting sustainable development policies in their various components. Within the European Union, my country has promoted ideas on how to strengthen the Commission.

With respect to the second theme of today's debate, I wish to recall that Italy has financed a study

of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of sustainable development partnerships, which represent a fundamental complement to traditional governmental approaches to environmental protection. Moreover, partnership has an important role in mobilizing financial resources from various sources and in promoting the spread of technologies and the sharing of experiences between Governments, universities, businesses and environmental non-governmental organizations. The partnerships initiated by Italy include, for example, the Mediterranean Renewable Energy Partnership project, which aims to provide modern energy services and to help mitigate climate change by developing a larger share of renewable sources in the energy mix of the Mediterranean region.

Many local Italian administrations stand out as examples of excellence in the field of sustainable development. We can cite the Rome for Kyoto programme, as well as the city of Milan — represented here yesterday by its mayor — which has prioritized the environmental issue in proposing its candidature for the Universal Exposition of 2015 under the theme "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life".

A critical role is played by business, which is a key actor for achieving the objectives set by the international community in that area. Businesses, however, need a clear regulatory framework to be able to make their full contribution. It is therefore up to Governments, in the context of the United Nations, to establish the rules. In that framework, flexible mechanisms, such as those provided for by the Kyoto Protocol, contribute to spreading new technologies in developing countries, fostering both the internationalization of businesses and the promotion of sustainable development. Those instruments should thus be strengthened with a more equitable geographic distribution of the same through incentives and capacity-building activities in favour of the most vulnerable countries.

In conclusion, we face a global threat that makes no distinction between different countries or different levels of affluence. Either we win this challenge all together or suffer together the grave consequences, moral and otherwise, for future generations if we do not address the question appropriately at the political, social, economic and technological levels. Our reflections over the past two days have been accompanied — I am convinced — by a sense of shared responsibility and a concrete, consistent commitment.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nikola Ruzinski, State Secretary of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction of Croatia.

Mr. Ruzinski (Croatia): Global warming is an unquestionable fact, as concluded by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The impact of climate change affects us all, and that is a common understanding today.

As the first generation facing the serious consequences of climate change, we all have an obligation to confront those consequences in order to mitigate the damage done, as well as to prevent future harmful impacts. Croatia firmly believes that fighting climate change demands urgent international efforts by developed and developing countries alike. The recently adopted Bali Road Map and Action Plan provide the framework for the formal negotiations to reach a comprehensive and strong international climate change agreement for the period beyond 2012. That action should be based on equity and in accordance with common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Croatia is ready to participate actively in the post-Kyoto process.

In facing today's climate change challenges, we are of the opinion that fulfilling commitments at the national level is crucial, but also needs to be supplemented by cooperation and synergy at the international level.

Croatia has developed a national climate change strategy and action plan that establish the objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 5 per cent, relative to 1990, in the period 2008-2012. The strategy's goals are planned to be incorporated into all sectoral policies, taking into consideration the cost-effectiveness of the reduction measures.

The main categories of mitigation include the promotion and increased usage of renewable energy sources and alternative fuels; improvement of energy efficiency in energy production, supply and consumption; and reduction measures in industrial processes and waste management. Increasing attention is being paid to education and raising public awareness. In order to effectively address climate

change mitigation issues, we are also revising our national energy strategy.

The reductions required to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere to a level that will not endanger the climate system cannot be achieved with the currently applied measures and procedures. What is required is the enhanced use of new, advanced technologies and additional investments in future low-carbon technologies supporting sustainable development. The vulnerability of the situation, due to the unpredictability of the climate itself and the increasing frequency of extreme atmospheric conditions throughout the planet, requires further scientific research to that end.

Climate change in our part of the world might affect the Adriatic sea level, change the hydrological situation, and in turn jeopardize the main branches of the Croatian economy — tourism and agriculture. It could also have a significant effect on forests, biological diversity and ecosystems. Therefore, our next step is the preparation of an impact, vulnerability and adaptation strategy, to be followed by the definition of measures to be taken in all relevant sectors in order to mitigate and adapt to the expected harmful effects.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Tran The Ngoc, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Viet Nam.

Mr. Tran The Ngoc (Viet Nam): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and wishes to highlight some issues of concern to us.

Climate change has become one of mankind's greatest and most pressing challenges in recent decades. The phenomenon has been rooted mainly in human activities since the beginning of the industrial revolution more than 200 years ago. Adverse effects of climate change, including sea-level rise, the shift of weather patterns and an increase in the frequency and scale of natural hazards are generally threatening the sustainable development of all countries throughout the world. Climate change has no definable boundaries. Therefore, international cooperation to deal with that global phenomenon is more necessary and critical than ever to avoid a serious disruption of global and national economic and social activities.

It is the developing countries and the poorest parts of the world that suffer the most from the adverse effects of climate change. Among those, Viet Nam has been listed among the top five most seriously affected countries. International experts have estimated that as many as 22 million Vietnamese, especially those living in the central and southern regions, will be displaced if the sea level rises by one additional metre. In fact, Viet Nam is already suffering from climate change.

There is scientific evidence provided in the recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, as well as in the Human Development Report, that we can afford to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, stabilize carbon dioxide levels and limit global warming. To achieve that requirement, we need first and foremost a clear and agreed road map for the post-2012 period in which the interests of poor countries and communities are of primary concern. It is our hope that a new agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will be developed in that regard, and we confirm our continued strong support for the general principles and differentiated responsibilities.

Presently, adaptation to climate change has become an essential concern for all of us and should be addressed in the framework agreement, with emissions reduction as the central issue. In contribution to the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC to reduce the negative impacts of climate change, aimed at sustainable development, the Government of Viet Nam recently adopted the important decision to establish an action plan to implement the Kyoto Protocol for the period 2007-2010. It will serve as the main framework for the management and coordination of climate change activities in Viet Nam towards achieving the strategic objective of sustainable development. In addition, a national target programme to cope with climate change is being developed in our country.

As one of several countries seriously affected by climate change, Viet Nam has been actively working with the international community to reach multilateral agreements to address climate change impacts. That global concern requires a global solution. We now look forward to joining the efforts undertaken by the international community to achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention, as well as global sustainable development.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Rezaul Kabir, Secretary of Environment and Forests of Bangladesh.

Mr. Kabir (Bangladesh): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the least developed countries. We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The group of least developed countries commends President Kerim for convening this thematic debate, which has special significance as we embark on the negotiations for a global agreement under the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action. We are confident that, under his able leadership, our deliberations will be steered to meaningful conclusions.

We consider the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to be the central multilateral structure within which the negotiations on climate change should take place. We believe that the thematic debate will contribute to generating significant political momentum that can support the ongoing negotiations under the UNFCCC. The thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC last December culminated in the adoption of the Bali Road Map.

The Road Map charts the course for a new negotiating process to be concluded by 2009. That will ultimately lead to a post-2012 international agreement on climate change. We should bear in mind that the agreement must be scientifically valid, environmentally sound, economically feasible and fair, particularly for the least developed countries, which are facing serious structural impediments. They do not have the necessary resources to meet the adaptation needs.

The Bali Action Plan has heightened our hope for a comprehensive global agreement by 2009. We must all work hard to complete the framework within the stipulated time frame. However, the most important issue for all of us is to agree on the stabilization target within the framework of the Bali Action Plan. We from the least developed countries — the most vulnerable countries — would certainly raise our voice in favour of the category-I stabilization scenarios established by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in which emission peaking for carbon dioxide is in the range of 2000-2015, and with a global mean temperature increase above the pre-industrial equilibrium of 2.0 to 2.4 degrees Celsius. To achieve that, we have to reduce our emissions by 50 per cent, compared to our present emissions, by 2050. Failing to achieve that target would entail unbearable consequences for the developing countries, especially the most vulnerable least developed countries.

Climate change magnifies the possibility of increased extreme weather events, such as floods, cyclones, tornados, droughts and desertification. The report of the Secretary-General has very aptly recognized that the least developed countries are bearing the brunt of increased climate variability and unpredictable and severe weather events. That group of countries needs immediate international support to build their resilience to global warming and climate change.

Comprehensive adaptation can help many countries to minimize economic losses induced by natural disasters. The lack of adequate infrastructure often undermines a country's adaptation efforts. That in turn can make a disaster hugely and horrifically costly. The United Nations and the international community must be mindful of those linkages. International support for adaptation must take into account the infrastructural needs of affected countries, particularly in disaster management, agriculture, water resources and coastal zone management.

We have noted with concern that the resources mobilized under different international mechanisms for the purpose of adaptation are grossly inadequate. The lion's share of resources earmarked for climate change is now being deployed for the clean development mechanism (CDM). That leaves a meagre amount of resources for adaptation. The least developed countries are not getting CDM projects. We need to address that immediately.

The agreement on establishing the Adaptation Fund is a welcome initiative. However, the Adaptation Fund, which will be generated through a 2-per-cent levy from CDM sales proceeds, will fall short of the required level of funding needed to meet the developing countries' adaptation needs. According to a recent UNFCCC study, about $50 billion would be required annually for adaptation by 2030. The Fund must have adequate resources commensurate with the needs of the developing countries, in particular the least developed.

The post-2012 agreement should include precise commitments on servicing the adaptation needs and priorities of the least developed countries. Contributions should be legally binding in a measurable and verifiable manner. We also need to find innovative ways and means to generate the required fund. Mobilizing resources through levying international air travel and joint implementation and emissions trading can be considered to cover the cost of adaptation activities. The allocation of available resources needs to be based on the principle of equity and fairness, taking into account the level of vulnerability in specific countries.

Let me in that context draw attention to the recent initiative of the European Union, entitled "Building a global climate change alliance between the European Union and poor developing countries most vulnerable to climate change". We invite the United Nations to initiate similar cooperation for least developed countries by providing support through various United Nations agencies. However, the support should not merely deal with studies and assessments, which is usually the practice. It must go beyond that in terms of implementing projects and programmes. Support in terms of investment projects can reduce or dissipate the dangers of climate change impact.

Clean and appropriate technologies are crucial for both mitigation and adaptation. There should be renewed efforts to promote carbon-neutral economic growth. While technological solutions exist, we need to develop effective policy frameworks and cooperation instruments to accelerate the development, deployment and diffusion of those technologies. The fact remains that state-of-the-art technologies are developed in the richer countries. However, the current framework does not support the transfer, deployment and diffusion of technologies.

Preferential access to environmentally sound technologies, know-how, practices and processes pertinent to climate change is crucial for least developed countries. The international intellectual property regime needs to be revisited and, if needed, revised so that an enabling atmosphere for the smooth transfer of technology is established. The United Nations can play a catalytic role by providing a solid platform to facilitate technology transfer. It can provide technical support to developing countries in conducting technology needs assessment, as well as in transforming such assessments into bankable technology transfer projects. The United Nations can also undertake studies and provide policy recommendations on how the current intellectual property regime could be tailored towards the sustainable development needs of the developing countries.

The role of partnership in addressing climate change is significant. While building partnerships among countries is crucial, it is also important to forge partnerships within countries between the Government, the business community, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. The business community, which provides investment capital and undertakes technological innovation, can play a major role in support of Governments' efforts in addressing climate change. We are encouraged that business leaders, during the 2008 World Economic Forum in Davos, clearly proclaimed their willingness to step up to play a pivotal role in any solution to climate change. However, business cannot do that in isolation. The development and implementation of technological solutions require clear policy frameworks from Governments. Efforts to counter the effects of climate change require concerted engagement by all stakeholders.

The world is now more united than ever before in addressing the threats of climate change. I would urge the United Nations to take the lead in facilitating discussions between developed and developing countries for an agreement on the stabilization target and subsequent action plans to save our humanity from the dangerous and imminent consequences. If we fail to do so, humanity is destined to suffer.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Arturo Gonzalez Aizpiri, Secretary-General for Environment of Spain.

Mr. Gonzalez Aizpiri (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain wishes to align itself with the statement made by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union. Allow me also to express the gratitude of the Spanish Government to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly for the commitment being demonstrated as the driving force for the multilateral response to climate change. We would like to reiterate our conviction that the United Nations system must enhance its coordination, resources and capacity to exert effective and worldwide leadership in that area.

Thanks to the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, we all know that climate change is a global problem that demands a global response. All countries must contribute to ensuring that the rise of average global temperature is inferior to 2 degrees Celsius with respect to pre-industrial rates. New modes of cooperation must therefore be explored by focusing on medium- and long-range objectives that facilitate the participation of all countries.

To that end, the agreements reached in Bali give reason for hope. They mark an unprecedented milestone that represents the commitment of all Governments to undertake a global effort to implement urgent measures that may allow us to address the great threat of climate change.

However, if all countries are to play a role in the future regime of the campaign against climate change beyond 2012, the division of labour must be equitable. That means that all developed countries must back up their commitment with a greater contribution to the reduction of emissions and a greater cooperative effort in support of developing countries. The European Union is already committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent, reaching 30 per cent if a global, fair and effective agreement is reached by 2012. The European Commission recently presented the proposals of European Union norms that will enforce compliance with those commitments.

Fighting climate change requires an integrated perspective that takes both mitigation and adaptation into account. For Spain, that is a crucial issue — adaptation must urgently be given the same priority as mitigation in the global agenda. The future of many countries depends on it. In particular, we note the great impact of climate change on the availability of water resources. That is an issue that will be addressed at the International Exhibition on water and sustainable development to take place in Zaragoza next summer.

Developing countries are already disproportionately suffering the greatest changes, accentuating existing economic and social inequalities. It has become increasingly clear that climate change is asserting itself as a formidable enemy of global equity. It is therefore imperative to establish a multilateral regime whose architecture provides for adaptation activities throughout its structure, including special support for the most vulnerable countries.

We find ourselves facing a real ethical challenge in which industrialized countries bear a great responsibility. It is also absolutely necessary, however, that the entire United Nations system be adapted to that new reality, strengthening its internal coordination and introducing the fight against climate change to all areas of its strategic vision.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General, which is a useful reference document for this session. It is a useful analysis that adequately reflects the great potential of the United Nations system and outlines appropriate strategic orientations. The Government of Spain wishes to express its support, as well as its sense of urgency and conviction that we should be even more ambitious.

Undoubtedly, some changes at multiple levels will be needed to achieve the integration of climate change into all decision-making processes and in all sectoral policies, prioritizing the most vulnerable sectors or systems from both the social and the economic perspectives. In particular, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must play a critical role at the multilateral level.

The response to climate change will require vast and as yet untold resources. We urgently need an accurate analysis of the costs, as well as of the mechanisms and fluctuations of investment and financing that may be necessary, bearing in mind that development cooperation is a key element. In that context, Spain undoubtedly believes in global and sustainable development. Over the past three years, we have more than doubled our official development assistance. In 2008, we will reach 0.5 per cent of our gross domestic product, and 0.7 per cent by 2012, with a special focus on climate change.

In 2007, Spain contributed €100 million, to be deposited within the next five years, to the environment and climate change window of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Millennium Development Goals, and €2.8 million to the UNDP-United Nations Environment Programme initiative. Furthermore, the World Health Organization will receive €3 million from the Spanish Government for its new strategy on health and climate change, in addition to the €8 million already allocated to other programmes.

We believe that the Clean Development Mechanism is a key instrument because of its ability to

generate a low-carbon economy with benefits for local communities. The Spanish Government has already pledged a total investment of €305 million in that area.

In conclusion, the Government of Spain understands that the fights against climate change and poverty are the two faces of the great challenge of our generation. It is time to move from words to deeds, to be brave and generous, and to achieve an agreement in 2009 that meets the needs of the entire planet and, in particular, the poorest countries. We believe that this will not be possible without a stronger and more effective United Nations system. Spain will support that key role in the multilateral endeavour, advocating an equitable share of necessary efforts, and will assume the responsibility and solidarity that we stand for.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Theodore Skylakakis, Secretary-General for International Economic Relations and Development Cooperation of Greece.

Mr. Skylakakis (Greece): We congratulate the President of the General Assembly for organizing this important debate. Let me emphasize that Greece supports the statement made by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union.

Climate change is one of the greatest and certainly most complex challenges that the international community is dealing with today and will have to address in the years to come. Climate change is already an environmental, social and economic reality, and most of its consequences within the next few decades will occur no matter what we decide to do today to mitigate the problem of emissions, not only because of the time lag between policy decisions and policy implementation, but also due to the time lag inherent to the phenomenon itself.

Our task is all the more difficult in that we need to find a global compromise that takes into consideration the various perspectives of all stakeholders; the different contributions to the problem made by developed, developing and least developed countries; the different historic emissions contributions of various countries; the different priorities and attitudes; the different economic, social and environmental impacts; and the different adaptation capacities. The compromise has to do all that and maintain, at the same time, the growth rates and the increase in development assistance and cooperation needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

In Bali, a positive step was taken. We agreed to launch formal negotiations on a global agreement for the period after 2012 and to end those negotiations in 2009. How can we achieve that monumental task? Developed countries bear most of the responsibility. Fast-growing economies in the developing world, where most world development will occur in the next decades, have to do their part, and the rest of the developing world — especially the least developed countries and the small island States — has also to be actively involved in the negotiations. The least developed countries, lacking the capacity to deal with the negative effects of climate change, are and will be affected the worst, although they have played a minor role in the creation of the problem. Those countries can morally play a catalytic role towards the successful outcome of our negotiations.

Turning now to the specific vehicles that we can use, I would like to briefly refer to public-private partnerships, which can be a very useful tool for implementing our efforts to address climate change, especially in the areas of mitigation and technology transfer. Involving the private sector in that way permits us to share with it goals, resources, knowledge and expertise, while it greatly diminishes the political risks involved in the huge trillion-dollar investments that have to be made to move towards a carbon-free global economy. Those investments can be paid back only in the long run and thus need the reassurance of a stable political environment and of the contractual obligations of the States involved, created within the public-private partnership context.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations activities in relation to climate change. The United Nations system can and should play a pivotal role in addressing the challenge, but it is also crucial for Member States to do their share at both the domestic and the international levels.

For Greece's Government, environmental policy is central. We believe that growth and the environment can never be treated as two separate, unrelated fields. We have therefore revised our national programme for the reduction of greenhouse gases to ensure absolutely the achievement of our European Union and international obligations. Greece acts fully consistently with its obligations under the Kyoto Protocol, and the Government will further intensify its efforts, not just in compliance with Kyoto and European Union policies, but also because we consider it our moral obligation.

Renewable energy is also crucial for Greece, and to that end a special spatial planning law will help raise the production of alternative green energy to 20 per cent in 2010 and 30 per cent in 2020. Moreover, recycling has increased from 6 per cent of all waste to 24 per cent in the past three years.

As far as the efforts at the international level are concerned, we believe that the United Nations system, apart from its crucial role in achieving and implementing a new global agreement for the post-2012 period, should also continue to be actively involved in assisting Member States in the promotion of their climate change policies and the implementation of any relevant initiatives at the regional or international level.

Greece is active at that level, too. The current Greek chairmanship of the Human Security Network has adopted as its main priority the impact of climate change on human security and in particular on vulnerable population groups, such as women, children and people fleeing their homes due to climate change. Relevant policy papers and initiatives are being prepared in cooperation with UNICEF, the United Nations University, the International Organization for Migration and other international partners.

Our priority also has a regional dimension. We intend to concentrate on least developed countries and small island developing States, where significant resources should be committed to financing adaptation efforts. In that respect, and believing in the importance of enhancing regional cooperation on adaptation, we have already earmarked funds in order to finance adaptation projects in least developed countries and small island developing States in Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean, in cooperation with and through relevant regional organizations.

The challenge of climate change is the historic challenge of our generation. We must meet it working together, with common purpose and determination.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Teodora Obradovic Grnca Rovska, State Counsellor and National Coordinator on Climate Change of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Ms. Obradovic Grnca Rovska (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of Mr. Dzelil Bajrami, Minister of Environment and Physical Planning, who has unfortunately been prevented from doing so personally at this point in time.

At the outset, allow me to express thanks to the President of the General Assembly for convening this timely and important event. The challenge of addressing climate change effectively has been elevated to the forefront of the international community's agenda, transcending borders and nations and demanding coordinated, strong and urgent response.

We welcome the achievements of the last Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol in Bali and the adoption of the landmark Bali Road Map, launching an inclusive negotiating process on a new global and comprehensive post-2012 agreement by the end of 2009 in Copenhagen. We find all four key building blocks of the Bali Action Plan equally important. We share the view that the United Nations provides the best setting to address that global threat as a matter of urgency, while yet in a comprehensive and coherent manner, in the context of sustainable development. We are fully aware that, in order to effectively address climate change risks and to act accordingly at all levels, strong commitment and the building of effective partnerships that would create synergy among all relevant national and international stakeholders — Governments, local authorities, the business community, the media, non-governmental organizations and so on — are of crucial importance. Capacity-building, increasing knowledge and raising awareness of the costs of non-action among all involved and relevant partners are also of key importance.

The Republic of Macedonia, as a candidate country for European Union (EU) membership, aligns itself with the statement of the EU presidency delivered this morning. Addressing climate change is one of the key driving forces of our national strategy for sustainable development. Furthermore, we recognize the merits of achieving sustainable development and advancing the transfer of technologies and knowledge through the implementation of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), thus contributing to the general commitment of the Government to attracting

investments, in this case manifested through environmental investments. The Government has established all necessary infrastructure to implement the CDM at the strategic, institutional, legislative and technical levels.

As a non-annex I country under the UNFCCC, we contribute towards the common goal of stabilizing the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases based on differential responsibilities, and we report on the steps taken at the national level to implement the Convention following the guidelines adopted by the Conference of Parties for non-annex I countries. Our second national communication on climate change is expected to be finalized by April 2008 and to be reported to the UNFCCC secretariat by September 2008. It is a strategic national document that will serve as a basis for comprehensive national action, including identifying and developing adaptation projects in the most vulnerable areas.

Of particular importance is the financing of enhanced mitigation and adaptation efforts, which require new and innovative concepts to cope with climate change in order to address potentially significant damage, particularly to agricultural production and food safety, increased water supply needs, human health risks, increased number of forest fires, and so on. If we are to achieve those goals, permanent sources of financing, both from the national budget and through bilateral and multilateral agreements, need to be provided. The Global Environment Facility, through its implementing agencies, should continue to assist the country in developing an integrated approach to climate change response measures and sustainable developing planning.

Let me conclude by expressing confidence that the fruitful discussion we have had in recent days has shown that, in order to cope successfully with the challenges of climate change, various partnerships have to be built to achieve our common goals. The Republic of Macedonia is ready to contribute to that end.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Fatima Raya Nasron, Deputy Secretary-General of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Malaysia.

Ms. Nasron (Malaysia): I would first like to congratulate the President of the General Assembly on convening this very important meeting and, secondly, to associate Malaysia with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The complexity of the climate change challenge is such that no one can address it alone. Partnerships therefore need to be established. We are of the opinion that partnerships and cooperative ventures can best be facilitated by the following four measures.

First, there must be coordination among the relevant organizations so that synergy can be achieved. However, difficulties may arise, given the conflicting priorities of the many stakeholders involved. Secondly, environment ministries must be given significant roles and authority to promote coordination among stakeholders. Thirdly, Governments must use tax incentives to promote cooperative ventures with insurance companies and financial institutions that have an important role to play in managing risk and financing technology related to climate change. Fourthly and finally, the United Nations should design specific programmes to promote partnerships and cooperative ventures based on successful experiences for countries to emulate.

Malaysia continues to hold that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities must form the core of measures to address climate change. On that basis, we believe that the following needs to be done as first steps if our aims are to be met.

Developed countries must assume their leadership role based on historical responsibility and technological and financial capacity, including the implementation of quantified targets and limitations. Developing countries should continue to implement sustainable development policies, supported and enabled by technology, financing and capacity-building. Mechanisms must be established to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and the implementation of pilot adaptation projects in developing countries. Obstacles to the transfer of technology and the provision of financial and other incentives to promote technology development and transfer should be removed. Funding of various types should be increased to developing countries in their development and implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions, as measures at the international level to address climate change must be made coherent, lest energies be dissipated and resources wasted.

Malaysia is of the view that adaptation must be considered as important as mitigation. That is due to the fact that climate change is already with us and that developing countries are bearing the brunt of its impact although they are least responsible for it. A plan is needed to ensure that funds are available to developing countries to cope with the diverse adverse effects of climate change on water supply, ecosystems, floods, coastal erosion and health.

We agreed in Bali to establish the Adaptation Fund. However, since the Fund is based only on a 2 per cent levy on the Clean Development Mechanism, we must work to ensure that it will be able to gain access to other sources of funding in order to stay viable in the long run.

As for mitigation, measures presently pursued by developing countries are mainly through the implementation of sustainable development policies. Actual projects carried out in line with those policies and measures can, with assistance from the United Nations system, be accelerated with technical knowledge, technology and financial assistance. That would enable them to move away from using fossil fuels to using renewable energy and to promote energy efficiency and the deployment of newer technologies like carbon capture and storage.

Mr. Ehouzou (Benin), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The climate change challenge can be met only if it is seen as an issue of development, rather than on its own. Further, it is not realistic to expect developing countries to give exclusive attention to climate change in their national priorities. Indeed, developing countries must grow economically in order to address climate change. Economic growth must take place alongside the environmental objective of reducing greenhouse gases and the social objectives of employment creation and poverty eradication. What developing countries require is the experience of those developed countries that have successfully decoupled their economic development from their carbon emissions. That is another facilitative role that the United Nations system can play.

The transfer of technology is closely tied to the role of the private sector and intellectual property rights. Unless some relaxation of intellectual property rights is allowed, such transfer may prove to be impossible because of the high costs involved. The United Nations system should explore the use of partnerships to make such transfers possible. Alternatively, the United Nations may help private sector organizations explore avenues for joint development of clean technology.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Malaysia's support for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, stressing at the same time the importance for annex I countries to fully implement their targets in the first commitment period. For its part, Malaysia will continue to address climate change within the context of sustainable development policies.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Youcef Yousfi, Permanent Representative of the delegation of Algeria.

Mr. Yousfi (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Arab Group, the delegation of Algeria would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this thematic debate on climate change, and extends its thanks to the Secretary-General for preparing the overview of United Nations activities in relation to climate change (A/62/644). The Arab Group associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Arab Group welcomes initiatives, such as this debate, to discuss climate change, and also finds that the Secretary-General's report provides useful information on the activities of the United Nations system in the field of climate change. However, the Arab Group emphasizes that negotiations on that matter must remain in the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol as the primary mechanism for comprehensively addressing that phenomenon. The Arab Group stresses that this debate should remain in the context of exchanging views on how to further advance the implementation of the commitments contained in the Framework Convention and its mechanism.

The Group is of the view that this thematic debate and the documents before it should not overlap with or pre-empt the ongoing system-wide consultations on other issues. We must bear in mind that the system-wide coherence process relates to operational activities in developing countries, while the issue of climate change is of concern to all States, with the primary

responsibility to be shouldered by industrialized countries.

The Arab Group stresses the need to commit to the ultimate UNFCCC goal of stabilizing atmospheric greenhouse gases at a level that prevents damage to the climate system, within a time frame that allows ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, in order to ensure that food production is not endangered and that economic development is able to progress in a sustainable manner, and in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

The Arab States, like all other developing countries, are vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change and their repercussions on development. Those vulnerabilities include, among other things, declining agricultural production and green cover, increased drought and desertification, the negative impact on biodiversity, the lack of food security and the threat to vital economic investments, in addition to the social and other negative consequences outlined by the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The Arab Group believes that dealing with the potential negative impacts of climate change requires international action and solidarity within the context of the goal of sustainable development with its three pillars — social development, economic development and environmental protection — based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. International action and cooperation must focus on supporting developing countries, which are the most vulnerable to climate change. Such action must also take into account the interests of developing countries that produce fossil fuels, including oil, whose economies will be adversely affected by measures to respond to climate change, and the interests of developing countries whose economies will be affected adversely by measures relating to the exploitation of forests.

The Arab Group emphasizes its commitment to the agreement reached by the States parties to the UNFCCC at their thirteenth Conference, which resulted in the Bali Action Plan and Road Map, as a framework for negotiations on post-2012 issues. It also emphasizes the need for technological and financial support and capacity-building measures to achieve sustainable development in developing countries.

The Arab States are working to include policies that address climate change issues at all levels in their national and regional sustainable development policies, consistent with sustainable economic growth and efforts to eradicate poverty. The Group is also working to adopt national and regional climate change action plans to assess possible impacts and to develop mitigation and adaptation programmes. It recognizes that mitigation programmes must focus on producing and using cleaner fuels, such as natural gas; improving energy efficiency in all sectors; diversifying energy sources, in accordance with the prevailing economic and social conditions; and expanding the use of cleaner environment-friendly production technologies.

An international conference on global solidarity for the protection of Africa and the Mediterranean from the impacts of climate change was held in Tunisia from 18 to 20 November 2007. It concluded with the adoption of a declaration and plan of action contributing to international and regional efforts to address the challenges of climate change and to activate the international cooperation mechanisms.

The Arab States call upon the developed countries to be more committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, because of their direct historical and current responsibility for climate change. They call for the inclusion in a post-2012 agreement of the identification of quantified commitments by developed countries and emphasize that policies and measures to fulfil those commitments should not adversely affect sustainable development in developing countries.

The Arab Group calls for a strengthening of partnerships among Governments, civil society and the private sector in addressing climate change, complementing international and bilateral cooperation but not replacing it. The Group stresses the need to hold the upcoming rounds of negotiations under the Bali Action Plan and Road Map at one of the United Nations headquarters in order to ensure the widest possible participation by Member States.

The Arab Group believes that the annex I parties should be committed to reducing emissions after 2012, bearing in mind that developing countries, including the Arab States, are still in the development phase and are in need of cleaner fossil energy with improved efficiency and of clean energy technology so that they can achieve progress and sustainable development, and that their first priority is still poverty eradication.

The Arab States call for the transfer to developing countries of clean technologies, including technologies for clean fuel production and for carbon dioxide capture and storage; the development of clean development projects; and the establishment of research and study centres for climate change in developing countries, including the Arab States, to study the impacts and challenges that their peoples face as a result of that phenomenon.

Finally, I would like to inform the Assembly that the Council of Arab Environmental Affairs Ministers, at its nineteenth meeting, held at the headquarters of the League of Arab States on 5 and 6 December 2007, adopted an Arab ministerial declaration on climate change, which constitutes the basis for future action and reflects the Arab point of view in dealing with climate change issues.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Fekitamoeloa 'Utoikamanu, the Permanent Representative of Tonga.

Mrs. 'Utoikamanu (Tonga): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the small island developing States of the Pacific Islands Forum, namely Fiji, Nauru, Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, the Kingdom of Tonga. Let me say at the outset that we associate ourselves with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Grenada on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/644) and applaud him and the President of the General Assembly for their collective leadership and efforts to position and maintain the prominence of climate change on the United Nations agenda. The range of issues and stakeholders identified in the report of the Secretary-General confirms its enormity and complexity and highlights the need to streamline, realign, integrate and harmonize agencies, functions and budgetary support in order to maximize the benefits from the utilization of the limited resources available.

The bringing together and forging of extensive partnerships between Government and the private sector to bring about and execute the requisite transformation and improvement in production and in the development and deployment of the necessary technologies and financial resources is also valid. That is particularly true in developed countries, since partnerships with the private sector in Pacific small island developing States are limited due to diseconomies of scale. That is particularly important, as we have embarked on the implementation of the Bali Road Map and the involvement of the United Nations and its agencies as the primary vehicles in facilitating action against climate change. Its support in the negotiations process is therefore crucial.

It is equally important to emphasize again that the time for action is now. We must not delay or defer action until the negotiations are completed. There is much work that can be done on the ground, particularly in the most vulnerable countries, which are the least equipped to face climate change.

The Pacific island countries are already experiencing climate change and its impacts, and the outlook for the future is grim. Our leaders have reiterated their deep concern over the serious and growing threat posed by climate change to the economic, social and environmental well-being of Pacific island countries and their communities, peoples and cultures. We consider the issue of climate change to be one of security since it has an impact on basic human security needs, including in the economic, food, health, environment and personal and community security areas. It was in this vein that, last year, our group participated in the Security Council's debate on energy, security and climate change (see S/PV.5663).

Our leaders have further agreed that national action plans for climate change should be developed and implemented and that climate change should be mainstreamed into national development planning. There is a clear linkage between climate change and the achievement of international frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation. The Pacific plan thus provides a solid platform for regional cooperation, guiding collective positions through the Commission on Sustainable Development and other international forums that advocate the special case of small island States.

In this regard, we are also of the view that the Small Island Developing States Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should be strengthened as a New York focal point for climate change so that the Pacific small island developing States do not have to wait for the day devoted to such States during the

Commission on Sustainable Development session to address the Barbados Programme of Action.

Our leaders welcomed the indication by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that it is physically and economically feasible to mitigate climate change and that, with concerted international support, adaptation can succeed. Conversely, without serious action, the global economy and the fragile resources of the Pacific will be severely affected.

Our regional agencies have been directed to intensify joint programming with the aim of advancing the implementation of regional frameworks and action plans, in particular the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action. These are aimed at better assisting members with developing adaptation measures in response to the effects of climate change; facilitating the collection and analysis of scientific, social and economic information and traditional knowledge in a manner that will allow for appropriate and informed decision-making by members; and identifying sustainable financing options at the national, subregional and regional levels to support climate change adaptation and mitigation by members.

Five of the Pacific small island developing States are also least developed countries and have benefited from preparing their National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs). At the Bali Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, many of our countries called for the extension of this type of support activity to all small island developing States.

This is a step that the United Nations system can implement without delay. All that is required is some technical and financial support. We have a network of expertise in the Pacific, including through our regional intergovernmental agencies, which are ready and willing to assist should a decision on the extension of NAPAs be taken. There will also be a need to support the implementation of projects identified by existing and future NAPAs.

Another area where the United Nations system can assist is to implement actions in support of the Global Environment Facility Capacity Development Initiative. While this is of relevance to all multilateral environment agreements, it is of particular importance in the area of climate change. The work that has been undertaken so far has been limited to national capacity self-assessments. We now need to progress to the vital phase of actual implementation.

Although the Pacific small island developing States have limited greenhouse gas emissions, we nevertheless are implementing a regional project to remove barriers to renewable energy. We estimate that this project will reduce our fossil fuel emissions by 33 per cent from the business-as-usual scenario by 2015. In real terms, this is only the equivalent of 2 million tons of carbon dioxide, but we have made a commitment to renewable energy in the region and we are making this contribution. We see an important supporting role from the United Nations system in ensuring that our project plans actually succeed in reducing greenhouse gases.

The Bali Road Map concluded that any new climate change regime would need to include reduced emissions from deforestation in developing countries. However, there is a need to develop appropriate monitoring guidelines as well as capacity at the local level to reduce deforestation. As we negotiate the Road Map, there is scope for a coordinated United Nations system effort to assist the relevant countries in establishing preparedness to implement projects to reduce deforestation.

In conclusion, the United Nations and the global community have this opportunity to have an impact on what the Secretary-General has noted as the defining issue of our era, and that is climate change. Let us truly make a difference and follow through on our commitments with concrete actions.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Barbados, His Excellency Mr. Christopher Hackett.

Mr. Hackett (Barbados): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CARICOM associates itself with the statements made by Ambassador Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the statement to be made shortly by the Ambassador Friday of Grenada, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States.

CARICOM wishes to convey its appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for convening this event and also to the Secretary-General for the

timely submission of his report on the United Nations activities in relation to climate change (A/62/644).

CARICOM welcomed the adoption of the Bali Road Map at Bali, Indonesia, in December 2007, including the Bali Action Plan, the operationalization of the Adaptation Fund and the decision taken by parties to the Kyoto Protocol to continue the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Protocol. Agreement on this comprehensive Road Map is an important first step, and we are cautiously optimistic that the Bali Conference represented a new beginning in our common effort to confront this global threat. The Secretary-General has said "there is the will, and the determination, at the highest level, to break with the past and act decisively" (A/62/511, annex II, para. 29). It is now our job to translate this will and determination into concrete and lasting results.

With this task comes the awesome responsibility of crafting a political response to the overwhelming scientific evidence that the future of humanity will be placed in greater jeopardy without urgent and ambitious global action to address climate change. The negotiations over the next two years will be extremely complex and challenging. However, CARICOM cannot emphasize enough the critical importance of a successful outcome to our very existence. We therefore urge all Member States to engage constructively and in good faith in the discussions and negotiations. Inaction or insufficient action, we believe, are unacceptable options for the smallest, poorest and most vulnerable members of our global society.

The inadequacy of financing for adaptation activities in developing countries is a major failing of the entire international system. As stated in the 2007 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme, the current framework provides the equivalent of an aid sponge for mopping up during a flood. That report estimates that new additional adaptation financing of at least $86 billion a year will be required by 2015 to meet the most basic and pressing adaptation needs of developing countries. Expressed in other terms, this figure represents a mere one tenth of what developed countries currently mobilize for military expenditure.

It is an unfortunate reality that CARICOM countries and small island developing States, together with the LDCs, all of which contribute the least to the problem, are confronted with the most serious challenges associated with climate change yet, at the same time, possess the least capacity for adaptation. Climate change of very damaging proportions and which poses a serious danger to the very existence of our countries is already occurring, and the longer the international community postpones the implementation of the necessary greenhouse gas emission cuts, the more adaptation will be required by small island developing States — and at much greater cost.

Negotiations around the four themes agreed to in Bali, namely, mitigation, adaptation, finance and technology, should not prevent advancement of or immediate action under any theme. For CARICOM, adaptation, finance and technology are not only required in 2009 or post-2012, they are also urgently needed now.

CARICOM member States have been forced to divert scarce resources from key developmental initiatives, such as those in health, education, food, provision of critical infrastructure, to climate change adaptation activities. Surely this has major implications for achieving sustainable development goals.

While increasing emphasis is being paid to private-public partnerships, the role of international cooperation remains essential and must be enhanced. CARICOM urges developed countries to take immediate action to significantly scale up the level of financing devoted to adaptation through the provision of new and additional resources, over and above traditional official development assistance. This would serve as a major confidence-building measure and demonstration of good faith, as we enter a period of great uncertainty.

The General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system, by the very nature of their respective mandates, are important forums for dialogue, raising awareness and the exchange of information on issues of global concern. CARICOM believes that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council must continue to ensure that addressing climate change remains a global priority, while fully respecting but not duplicating, the ongoing negotiating process with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

In this context, future actions or initiatives by the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council should add value to the ongoing negotiations and be guided by the needs of Member States, particularly those most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. While we are convinced that a parallel negotiating theatre should not be established within the General Assembly, we are equally convinced that the issue of climate change should not be held in abeyance in New York until our work is completed within the UNFCCC.

CARICOM has some concerns over the orientation of the report of the Secretary-General and, in particular, the rationale given for what he terms "[a]n inclusive and coherent approach to climate change". We believe that the first and overriding priority of the United Nations system's work on climate change should be addressing the needs of those most vulnerable and most adversely impacted by climate change — small island developing States, LDCs, countries in Africa and disaster-prone developing countries — rather than, as the report states, providing support for negotiations. The effectiveness of the United Nations system should be assessed by its capacity to deliver the required assistance to, and build capacity in, these vulnerable countries and other developing countries.

CARICOM member States are highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change including rising sea levels, increasingly severe hurricanes and other extreme weather events, drought and water scarcity, coral bleaching and declining fish stocks. In this regard, we call on relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to ensure that their activities in the area of climate change in our region are fully supportive of national and regional efforts to address these specific challenges.

This demand-driven approach with strong national and regional ownership must be embedded in the work of the United Nations at the national and regional levels. Areas, sectors, projects and programmes identified as having priority in our national communications to the Convention, national and regional adaptation plans and sustainable development plans and strategies should receive the full support of the relevant parts of the United Nations system.

Towards these ends, the international community, including the United Nations system should, we believe, first, assist CARICOM to incorporate climate change adaptation concerns in national development plans and strategies and provide the required resources to implement these plans and strategies. Secondly, it should provide technical and financial resources to assist CARICOM to strengthen national and regional climate change coordination mechanisms such as the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center. Thirdly, it should support cooperation for information-sharing on adaptation technologies, development and transfer between developing countries, including the dissemination of examples of climate-change-adaptation "best practices". Fourthly, it should provide technical and financial assistance to CARICOM in the areas of climate monitoring and modelling and support the further development of vulnerability assessments, climate scenarios and climate-impact studies in the region. Fifthly, it should provide technical and financial support in the areas of disaster preparedness, early warning, risk management, disaster mitigation and disaster recovery and rehabilitation. And, finally, it should develop new financial arrangements to provide adaptation measures and provide insurance to small island developing States to enable them to recoup losses due to the impact of climate change and rising sea levels.

In Bali, our main message was captured in the phrase "no island left behind". Post-Bali, we are hopeful that this short, yet simple message, remains at the forefront of all efforts by the international community to address climate change.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Grenada, Mr. Angus Friday.

Mr. Friday (Grenada): On behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, I have the honour of conveying to you, Sir, as President of the General Assembly, our sincere appreciation for your leadership on this critical issue of climate change. This issue and this leadership is manifested by the urgency given to the climate change agenda at this sixty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly.

We are very encouraged by the rapidity with which this thematic debate is being held following Bali. During this debate, we have been presented with a wide array of ideas with the participation of others

from outside of the United Nations family. They have enlightened us with some of their own perspectives on this matter.

Clearly, we at the United Nations do not have a monopoly on ideas and tackling the problem of climate change is not a task we will accomplish by ourselves. Opening the dialogue to others is one way of developing partnerships, and partnerships are essential if we are to work together to overcome this challenge of global warming.

Those who attended the eventful meeting in Bali may well agree that Bali was like a strong wind, blowing down old barriers so that new alliances and partnerships could be grown; groups which had previously stood apart began negotiating along common lines. Countries that had stood outside of the mainstream of the general consensus had the courage to join in. In a real sense, the spirit of partnership began in Bali, and we look forward to seeing this continue and thrive.

Speaking of partnerships, we welcome the operationalization of the adaptation fund, and we congratulate the Global Environment Facility on receiving the mandate to provide the service of managing that fund.

In bringing my opening remarks to a close, I would just like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all of us in AOSIS, to once again recognize the outstanding efforts and hospitality of the Government and people of Indonesia. Indeed, as we move forward on the Bali Road Map, we eagerly anticipate further successes in Poland and in Denmark.

Today, AOSIS would like to talk about partnerships for urgent action. As we rapidly approach the enhancement of the Kyoto Protocol post-2012, I must emphasize that we in the island States do not have the luxury of time. We are at the edge of a tipping point and time has run out. As you know, the small island developing States began to alert the world to the dangers of global warming some 20 years ago. So today I do not emphasize the fact that climate change is a critical existential issue for the island States, because we have said again and again that this is a matter of survival for us. There is no need for me to elaborate on the fact that our coastal zones are being rapidly eroded and that we are threatened by the increasing ferocity of hurricanes, which in the case of my own country have caused damage worth 200 per cent of our gross domestic product. It would be repetitive for me to talk about the salinization of our limited water resources and the encroaching desertification that threatens our agriculture and food security.

Today, AOSIS does not wish to elaborate on the disastrous impacts of climate change that we are now facing, because, quite frankly, there is a time for talking and there is a time for action. The time for action is now.

We must work as one to achieve the fundamental principle of protecting the most vulnerable among us, as mentioned by the Secretary-General, be they in the villages of low-lying countries such as Bangladesh and Guyana, in vulnerable atolls such as Tuvalu and the Maldives, in hurricane-prone areas such as Jamaica or Belize, or in countries facing greater desertification such as Cape Verde and many African countries.

We need to understand that no man is an island and no island must be left behind. That is the fundamental principle for which we are building partnerships and for which the United Nations and the world must work together: no island left behind.

Last year, we joined hands in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme in preparing for Bali. We also joined hands with the United Nations Foundation and the Friends on Climate Change in developing a round-table series that deals with the very immediate issue of how we can go about financing climate change. As a matter of fact, tomorrow we have the final installation of that process, which will be held at the Indian Mission. We will release a green paper on global islands green financing, which deals with the whole issue of financing for adaptation in low-lying coastal and island States. The details of proposed actions for working in partnership with others will be spelled out in that document, which will be released tomorrow.

Today, however, we are announcing further partnerships. In that regard, we warmly welcome the staunch support expressed by our fellow islanders in the Mediterranean. Greece has agreed to come on board as a cornerstone partner, with one million euros. In recognition of the immediate threats faced by all of us, this is a partnership for urgent action. It will support the members of AOSIS as we navigate our way from Bali all the way through to Copenhagen, it will help with information-sharing, and it will help to

mainstream our adaptation into the very core of our economic development.

That special account will be used as seed funding to promote and attract further partnerships and to develop tangible projects on the ground. We see it as a necessary adjunct to working synergistically with the Global Environment Facility, the adaptation fund and other multilateral, bilateral and private sources of funding.

We welcome this type of partnership and indeed the strong expressions of support that we have had from other countries, United Nations agencies, other United Nations partners, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, all of which are very much welcome, and we seek to strengthen them.

I think that here at the United Nations in New York, as a starting point, we can ask for the support of our partners in calling for the strengthening of the Small Island Developing States Unit. We certainly look forward to the review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

The United Nations and the world are working at addressing climate change, but much more work needs to be done. What we need is work, not talk. We at AOSIS do not have the luxury of time. We cannot wait for implementation, we cannot wait for action, and we cannot wait to adapt. We must do all of those things now. When we meet again, the tenor of our deliberations must be positive, it must inspire confidence. We must be talking about some of the success stories that we have achieved, because it is those success stories and indeed the confidence we have inspired that will help us to build partnerships. We certainly encourage others not so much to speak of the problems in the future — although we cannot run away from problems — but to emphasize the solutions. Indeed, as suggested yesterday by one speaker, the United Nations must now embark upon a systematic mechanism for monitoring implementation and sharing success stories.

In closing, I said that AOSIS has been at this for some 20 years. In 1988 and perhaps in 1998, we may have called for debates. But in 2008 we are calling for action, urgent action through partnerships to ensure that no island is left behind.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Martin Chungong Ayafor, representative of Cameroon.

Mr. Chungong Ayafor (Cameroon): It is an honour and a privilege to speak on behalf of the African Group in this debate on the theme "Addressing climate change: the United Nations and the world at work".

The African Group associates itself with the statement made this morning by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this event and for providing an informative background paper on the key issues of the subject under consideration. I also wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report.

Climate change is a serious challenge and threat, due to its global nature. It is being discussed widely, in various forums. However, those debates and forums should not be allowed to undermine the ongoing consultations within the existing frameworks and instruments aimed at addressing this global challenge, namely the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol. It is imperative that all initiatives aimed at addressing the impacts of climate change endeavour to bolster and strengthen those instruments.

Climate change is a reality that we cannot overlook. It affects all countries, but its impacts are most keenly felt in developing countries, particularly in African countries, where it is threatening efforts for poverty eradication, economic gains made in the recent past and sustainable development achievements.

In terms of impact, Africa is at the receiving end of climate variability and climate change, with all the consequences of a rise in the number of extreme weather events, such as floods, droughts, cyclones and high winds, which have the capacity to damage national and subregional economies within the continent. Droughts have led to economic losses due to decreases in hydropower generation, while floods have caused widespread damage to infrastructure, thus disrupting food production and threatening food security.

We are all aware now that temperature rises have been accompanied by an increase in vector-borne diseases such as highland malaria, typhoid, cholera and Rift Valley fever. Similarly, as a result of global warming, glaciers on Mount Kenya and Mount Kilimanjaro, for instance, are fast melting. That, in effect, has a very negative impact on the people around those regions.

Individual countries are undertaking several initiatives to improve our understanding of how adaptation can be achieved and in particular how our adaptive capacity can best be enhanced.

Recent concerted efforts by African countries to tackle their common concerns are many. The declaration and action plan adopted by the International Solidarity Conference on Climate Change Strategies for the African and Mediterranean Regions, an event held in Tunis from 18 to 20 November 2007, sought to contribute to the international effort addressing climate change challenges and to enhance international and regional cooperation and solidarity. It aims at enabling the countries of the region to implement their national climate change adaptation plans and strategies. In addition, the Tunis declaration was endorsed a few days ago in Addis Ababa by the Tenth Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union. Those initiatives are a testimony of the commitment to fighting climate change.

Although African countries are in a small way addressing the impact of climate change, their efforts will not be very effective without international support. It is on the basis of the foregoing that the more the international community delays in initiating and supporting adaptation activities in the vulnerable countries, the more costly it is going to be in the future. We believe that the debate on climate change should now concentrate on actions.

In relation to financing, the African Group wishes to observe that adaptation to the impacts of climate change is the key to poverty eradication and sustainable development. Assisting developing countries, particularly the poor and the most vulnerable countries, in coping with their adaptation needs that are due to the impacts of climate change is an obligation under the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol and must be undertaken in an urgent and sustainable manner.

A recent assessment of adaptation funds suggests that tens of billions of dollars will be required each year. However, thus far, only a few hundred million dollars are available from voluntary funding sources. They are the Least Developed Countries Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund, and the Global Environment Facility small grants and bilaterals. It is therefore obvious that a huge gap exists between adaptation funding needs and the actual funding available. That huge gap needs to be dealt with in earnest. It is imperative that the Adaptation Fund be funded adequately and expeditiously.

Achieving equitable distribution of clean development mechanism projects and addressing the need for financial resources to support these activities have been recognized as having priority. We wish to note that clean development mechanisms have the potential to play an important role for the sustainable development and poverty alleviation of sub-Saharan Africa.

We must emph size that, while we underscore the fact that only a global solution can solve the global problem of climate change, this solution must be consistent with our sustainable development priorities, poverty reduction and our right to grow our economies.

As regards the post-2012 climate regime, we believe that an ambitious comprehensive agreement, negotiated within the UNFCCC and building on the Kyoto Protocol, must be our focus and should, as agreed at Bali, be achieved no later than 2009. To that end, we call on the international community to fast-track and support the processes and outcomes of the Bali Conference, particularly the Bali Road Map.

Mitigation and adaptation cannot be achieved without appropriate technology. It is our hope that the ongoing United Nations efforts and the discussions on the Bali Road Map will be given priority.

The UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol provide a sound basis for multilateral global action. Although some progress has been made and is being made in the implementation of those instruments, these actions are far from adequate, primarily because of the limited scope of the commitments by developed country parties and inadequate implementation of those commitments.

Finally, we would also wish to caution on a current trend towards amplifying climate change while at the same time shelving the threat of poverty and the need to make headway on the internationally agreed

development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Yu Qingtai, Special Representative for Climate Change Talks of China.

Mr. Yu Qingtai (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The issue of climate change remains a serious challenge in today's world. It affects not only the development of the global economy and prosperity, but also the very existence of mankind. A united front for tackling this challenge and safeguarding the common home of mankind has become the common aspiration of all members of the international community.

The Bali Conference held last December was a turning point and a milestone in the process of negotiations over climate change. It marked the beginning of a new historic period of international cooperation in responding to the challenge. Its significance can be seen in the following aspects.

First, an agreement was eventually reached on the Bali Road Map, which provides direction to the efforts by the international community to tackle climate change. Secondly, the Conference in Bali contributed to the acceleration of negotiations by confirming and adhering to the twin-track negotiating process and by a clear-cut pronouncement on the mechanism and the timetable for the process.

Thirdly, the Bali Conference reaffirmed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol as the main channels for international response on climate change and reiterated the fundamental principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, thereby safeguarding the very foundation of international cooperation in this regard. Finally, the Conference guaranteed the comprehensiveness, integrity and effectiveness of international cooperation.

It must also be recognized, however, that the Bali Road Map only marks the beginning. The international community must continue with substantive consultations and negotiations in order to arrive at a final agreement on post-2012 international cooperation on climate change within the next two years. In that connection, I wish to emphasize the following three points.

First, the principles established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Protocol, in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, represent the consensus of the international community and constitute the foundation for international cooperation to respond to climate change. Any framework for future arrangements must be firmly based on those principles.

Secondly, the four building blocks — namely, mitigation, adaptation, technology and financing — are all essential components in developing an effective framework to respond to climate change. As such, they should be given equal attention. None of them should be distorted or neglected. Issues of concern to developing countries, including that of the transfer of technology, should be given particular attention.

Thirdly, in accordance with the Bali Road Map, the international community should establish effective mechanisms as soon as possible in order to ensure that measurable, reportable and verifiable assistance is provided to developing countries with regard to financial resources, technology and capacity building, so as to promote the achievement of sustainable development in those countries.

As the most broad-based intergovernmental organization, the United Nations is rightly playing a positive role with respect to responding to climate change, in particular in the following areas.

First, with regard to political mobilization, the United Nations should make full use of the General Assembly and other relevant platforms to carry out dialogue on all major issues related to climate change, with the objective of raising awareness of this challenge and facilitating the achievement of sustainable development.

Secondly, with regard to promoting partnership, the United Nations should make full use of such channels as the Commission on Sustainable Development to encourage the establishment of partnerships between Governments, the business community, the academic community and non-governmental organizations, so as to encourage joint efforts in the area of climate change.

Thirdly, with regard to providing pragmatic support, the United Nations should utilize available new resources to increase financial flows and the transfer of technology in order to support developing countries in the formulation and implementation of their national climate change strategies.

China takes the issue of climate change very seriously. Within our capabilities, we have adopted a significant number of policies and measures to respond to the challenge posed by climate change. In the years to come, China will continue to shoulder its share of responsibility and make its own contribution in that regard. We will also help other developing countries to enhance their capacity to adapt to climate change. We are confident that, through the joint efforts of the entire international community, we will certainly succeed in overcoming the challenges of climate change and leave behind us a world characterized by harmonious, clean and sustainable development, for the benefit of future generations.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Markku Niinioja, Special Representative for Climate Change and head of the delegation of Finland.

Mr. Niinioja (Finland): Finland associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union.

Climate change is now high on the political agenda. Based on the recent findings of scientists and the work of the International Panel on Climate Change, we now have a better understanding of how multifaceted this problem is and what needs to be done in the short and medium term to address it. Cooperation is the only solution. We need a common vision. The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali launched an inclusive negotiating process, which is to be concluded by December 2009 in Copenhagen with a new global and comprehensive post-2012 agreement. For the first time, it has been agreed that all nations must take part in reducing emissions. The contributions expected of countries at different stages of development need to reflect their capabilities.

The United Nations has a decisive role in the response to climate change. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary forum for future action. But the contribution of the entire United Nations system is required. Therefore, efforts towards greater coherence and coordination in the United Nations system will assist us in developing coherent, integrated and holistic responses. The report of the Secretary-General (A/62/644) demonstrates that the United Nations has already done much. But even greater efforts are required. United efforts, partnerships and cooperation between various stakeholders are needed. The new challenges resulting from the Bali Road Map call for strengthened international environmental governance. The United Nations should serve as the key forum, bringing together stakeholders from the private and public sectors, as well as civil society.

Let me now touch upon some issues of particular interest to Finland. Climate change has serious implications for international peace and security. Even if we are successful in our efforts to mitigate climate change and adapt to its consequences, the impact on ecosystems, agriculture, human health and — as we have already seen with rising sea levels in small island States — human security will have a profound effect on the international security environment. No country can tackle problems of this magnitude alone. Sound environmental policies need to become an essential part of conflict prevention on a global scale.

In that respect, Finland is pleased with the ongoing cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme and the Peacebuilding Commission, which will involve environmental advocacy at the political level in New York, as well as technical assistance to United Nations country teams in the pilot countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Development is another primary field of United Nations activity where climate change is currently one of the biggest threats. Climate change makes the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals more difficult. It is not only an environmental issue, it is also a sustainable development challenge. Integrating the climate issue into national development plans and poverty-reduction strategies is crucial.

Forests play an important role in sustainable development. However, deforestation and changes in land use are continuing at an alarming rate. It is estimated that some 20 per cent of global carbon dioxide emissions result from deforestation in tropical forests. If we do not stop that development, the consequences can be grave. Sustainable forest

management in all countries can be crucial to reducing greenhouse gases, not only through the sink effect but also by providing a source for renewable energy and material substitution through harvested wood products.

I am pleased to note that the importance of forests is now widely recognized in the international climate policy debate. In Bali, we decided to make the reduction of emissions from deforestation in developing countries one of the building blocks of the future climate change regime. The contribution of various United Nations institutions and other stakeholders will be needed to cover this new element in climate discussions.

Lastly, Finland welcomes the emergence of the gender perspective in the climate change debate. Impoverished women's disadvantages — their limited access to resources, restricted rights, limited mobility and a muted voice in shaping decisions — make them highly vulnerable to climate change. However, women are not just helpless victims of climate change. They are also potentially powerful agents of change, through their knowledge and responsibilities in natural resources management.

This also relates to children, who are closely dependent on women. All aspects connected to climate change, not only mitigation and adaptation, but also policy development and decision-making, should include a gender perspective.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sergio Serra, Special Representative for Climate Change and head of the delegation of Brazil.

Mr. Serra (Brazil): First of all, let me say that Brazil associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

I commend the President of the General Assembly for organizing this thematic debate. Along with eradicating poverty and combating hunger and disease, climate change is one of the most urgent challenges of our times. Historic emissions of carbon dioxide are its main cause; its consequences are already being observed. The poorest communities in developing countries are the most affected by, and the least able to cope with, a warming planet.

As a global challenge, climate change requires a global response. The responsibilities are common, but they are also differentiated. Brazil is committed, in accordance with the Bali Action Plan, to pursue "nationally appropriate" actions on mitigation of climate change that are "measurable, reportable and verifiable", according to our fair share and our respective capabilities.

Climate change has profound social, economic and environmental implications. Hence, the engagement of a vast array of stakeholders from civil society and the private sector should be praised and welcomed. This should not replace, however, the central role of States and international organizations.

The establishment of partnerships among different actors can help us reach a global low-carbon economy. One such partnership is the ethanol programme that Brazil has been developing since the 1970s as a substitute for petrol, involving the government and the private sector. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the main source of historic and current carbon dioxide emissions is the burning of fossil fuels. By extensively using ethanol, Brazil has avoided emitting 644 million tons from fossil fuel use in the past 30 years. It is an established fact that ethanol production from sugar cane reduces greenhouse gas emissions, does not affect the production of staple foods and is socially sustainable.

Despite this untapped potential, developed countries have erected all sorts of barriers to biofuels from developing countries while spending billions of euros and dollars in subsidies for inefficient producers. Such measures distort markets, raise energy prices, spread poverty, endanger food security and are inconsistent with climate concerns. It is time that the lofty talk about climate sustainability was matched with real action that effectively mitigates climate change.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol provide the appropriate forum for concerted action. When discussing future action, in spite of some allegations to the contrary, we are not looking at a new post-2012 regime; nor is there a Kyoto Protocol expiration date. The successful outcome of the Thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention, last December, which included the approval of the Bali Action Plan, reiterated the validity and importance of

the current climate change instruments and multilateral regime.

Debates and initiatives undertaken by the United Nations, its specialized agencies and its Member States can strengthen and support negotiations and actions under the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol. The recent General Assembly debate on climate change as a global challenge, as well as the high-level event convened by the Secretary-General last September, paved the road that led to a successful Bali meeting. Today's fruitful discussions are a part of this process and are providing valuable on for the ongoing negotiations under the UNFCCC.

The international community should concentrate efforts on implementing the Bali Action Plan. Mitigation, adaptation, financing and technology development and transfer are its four pillars. I would like to single out the issue of technology. We must act decisively to promote, facilitate and finance the transfer of and access to environmentally sound technologies and know-how, particularly from developed countries to developing countries, for both mitigation and adaptation. Innovative mechanisms for removal of barriers to the transfer and dissemination of these technologies to developing countries, including new and additional financing, are fundamental issues that should be discussed and agreed upon under the Bali Action Plan. This will enable developing countries to implement mitigation actions in line with their historical responsibilities and current capabilities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his comprehensive overview of the United Nations climate change activities (A/62/644). The report reiterates the intrinsic relationship between global warming and the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals.

When discussing the different roles of relevant United Nations bodies in this matter, we should ensure that they act under the guidance of Member States, ensure national ownership, take into account UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol decisions and guide themselves by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. By adhering to these four criteria, the United Nations system can play an instrumental role in assisting our countries' efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Antonio García Revilla, Assistant Secretary for Multilateral Affairs and head of the delegation of Peru.

Mr. García Revilla (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru particularly welcomes the initiative to hold this high-level debate of the General Assembly to consider together United Nations activities in relation to climate change.

My delegation wishes to align itself with the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We also wish to state our agreement with the views expressed yesterday by the Permanent Representative of Mexico on behalf of the facilitators on international environmental governance with regard to the pending tasks for the United Nations system in this field.

In this regard, I wish to stress something that my country considers to be central in the fight against climate change. The first measure required to reverse the present climate change trend is to urgently set even more ambitious goals for reductions in the levels of greenhouse gas emissions. We believe that developed countries should strengthen their leadership on this task, on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Developing countries too have taken on a vital commitment and role, because we are the most severely affected. The challenge is to ensure that our development efforts continue to be sustainable in the face of the challenge of climate change. Peru believes that mainstreaming mitigation and adaptation policies in the international development agenda is an essential contribution by the United Nations system.

Indeed, the United Nations system is in an advantageous position for promoting within the international cooperation agenda those initiatives that, with the requisite urgency, developing countries need in order to reduce the risks of disaster caused by extreme climatic phenomena and to achieve sustained and sustainable economic growth.

In the area of adaptation, integrated and sustained adaptation policies are required over a period of time, covering areas such as water resource management, agriculture, health, industry, human settlements and risk reduction. In this regard, sectoral adaptation plans would be implemented following an integrated

approach that would simultaneously emphasize the protection of the health of affected populations, their food security, improving their resiliency to extreme phenomena and protecting their economic infrastructure and their biodiversity. Furthermore, to know and assess the vulnerabilities of our countries to climate change requires the development of capacities and technologies that the system would be able to mobilize given its comparative advantages in the field of development cooperation.

We have seen the United Nations system's valuable efforts to follow a more integrated approach in its support for countries as they implement their national adaptation policies. However, we must stress once more that, despite these laudable efforts, financial resources are still meagre, in view of the magnitude of the problem. We urgently need new and additional resources to start comprehensive initiatives. Let us not forget that, as mentioned during yesterday's panel discussion, and under the Convention itself, compliance with the developing countries' commitments depends on developed countries truly meeting their commitments related to financial resources and technology transfers.

In the area of mitigation, we need to promote low-carbon economic growth that will allow us to meet our development priorities, in particular the eradication of poverty, which afflicts a large part of our population. Developing such an economy requires that our countries adopt and implement environmentally sustainable growth strategies, which requires financial cooperation and better access to appropriate technologies. The development of clean and sustainable technologies, and their dissemination through international cooperation are crucial to a long-term greenhouse gas reduction strategy. United Nations agencies, programmes and funds are able to support the dissemination of the best technologies to counter greenhouse gas emissions for use in the system's projects in support of our national efforts. In that way, they contribute to fighting greenhouse gas emissions and to technology transfer, which is needed if we are to be more efficient. Despite that, we consider that we need to reflect on the development of the United Nations system's management in the energy field.

Finally, as was pointed out at the Earth Summit in 1992, we must consider that unsustainable patterns of production and consumption are being proposed as models to developing countries. These models are increasingly incompatible, as I have said, with preserving life on our planet in the medium and long term, in particular with respect to the increase in greenhouse gases, as noted in the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Finally, Peru believes that the United Nations system has a fundamental role to play with a view to actively promoting the attainment of the goals of the Convention. Each part of the system, in its own area of competence, can assist with climate change mitigation and adaptation policies upon the request of countries.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alejandro Wolff, representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Wolff (United States of America): The United States commends the Secretariat for its work in highlighting the importance of building and strengthening partnerships to address the global challenge of climate change and appreciates the Secretary-General's report offering an overview of relevant United Nations activities (A/62/644).

A global solution to confronting climate change will require that we all collaborate on scientific and technological research, partner with industry on innovative energy efficiency and clean energy projects, and cooperate to finance mitigation and adaptation measures.

The United States supports the outcome at Bali and is strongly committed to achieving the goals of the Bali Road Map and reaching an agreement in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2009. Furthermore, the United States will continue to commit significant effort and resources to build and strengthen its partnerships to address this global challenge, including through an international funding mechanism to promote clean technologies. We are working hard to foster public-private investments and innovative clean energy technologies through multilateral initiatives, including the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, the Methane to Markets Partnership and the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum, among many others.

In his state of the union address last month, President Bush expressed his desire to reach an international agreement that will slow, stop and eventually reverse the growth of greenhouse gases, and he pointed out that such an agreement can accomplish

this only if it includes commitments by every major economy.

Late last month, the United States convened the second meeting of the world's major economies. This process is meant to support agreement under the Framework Convention and will consider a long-term goal for reducing greenhouse gases, near- to mid-term national emissions road maps and commitments, technology collaborations, sectoral efforts and financing. Participants found that meeting constructive. We look forward to additional meetings, to be hosted by our colleagues from France and Japan, and to a meeting of leaders of the major economies on this important issue this year.

The United States is taking action to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. In December, President Bush signed the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. Taken together, the new mandates for motor vehicles, alternative fuels, lighting, appliances and buildings could reduce projected greenhouse gas emissions by more than 6 billion metric tons by 2030. In March, the United States will host the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference, where Government officials and industry leaders from around the world will unite to confront the most pressing issues facing renewable energy development and deployment.

Partnerships and actions to address climate change are taking shape in cities and states across the United States, in communities large and small, as well as among business groups and our centres of research and learning. The United States is partnering with other countries to promote the development of advanced energy technologies that will help protect the global environment while enabling economic growth. Through the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, for instance, we are expanding investment and trade in cleaner energy technologies in countries representing about half of the global population, economic output, greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption.

The United States has made significant investment in the research, development and deployment of new technologies. Since 2001, the United States has invested nearly $18 billion in research and development of cleaner, lower carbon and more efficient technologies, and will provide more than $36 billon in loan guarantees over the next two years, as well as other measures, to help accelerate their deployment.

Proving low-carbon coal technology on the shortest possible timeline is among the most important challenges we face if we are to reduce global emissions. In the United States, we are making the investment necessary to prove these technologies. President Bush's fiscal year 2009 budget for research, development and demonstration of advanced clean coal technology, when combined with required private-sector contributions, will approach a total investment of nearly $1 billion. It is the largest single budget request for advanced coal technology by a President in over 25 years. In addition to this year's budget request, the United States Government is providing $8 billion in loan guarantees for advanced coal projects, along with nearly $2 billion in tax credits.

At the September Major Economies Meeting, President Bush called for a new international clean technology fund to help developing nations harness the power of clean energy technologies. Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda of Japan and Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom have also risen to the challenge, and our Governments are working together in establishing a new fund to be administered at the World Bank. The multilateral clean technology fund will stimulate and leverage private sector investment in clean technology in developing countries as those countries fulfil their commitments with respect to limiting greenhouse gas emissions. The President has committed to provide $2 billion to the fund over the next three years, and we urge other potential donors to join our effort.

We also need to remove the obstacles to the global use of the most advanced clean energy technologies. In November of last year, the United States and the European Union jointly submitted a ground-breaking proposal at the World Trade Organization to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers for environmental goods and services, with priority action on technologies directly linked to addressing climate change and energy security. Removing these barriers provides a tremendous opportunity to make a real impact on global emissions.

With regard to the Secretary-General's overview of United Nations activities, the United States commends the Organization on its efforts to improve and enhance collaboration and coordination on climate

change across all its agencies in order to maximize effectiveness. We enthusiastically support the organizational commitment to reduce carbon emissions through conservation and efficient management of resources across all agencies. We believe that the United Nations campaign to reduce its carbon footprint can contribute to making the United Nations an overall more efficient Organization, and can have beneficial environmental impacts as well, just as the United States federal Government's programme seeks to do.

But while carbon neutrality is a laudable long-term goal, we believe that United Nations agencies should explore the use of extrabudgetary funds, rather than regular budgetary funds, should they decide to purchase carbon credits, as that would avoid the diversion of precious resources from the core functions of United Nations agencies. The United States commends the United Nations for its vision to build partnerships across the world to tackle the challenge posed by a changing climate. We are committed to doing our part to contribute to this global effort.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Hjálmar Hannesson, Permanent Representative of Iceland.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): We would like to thank the President for convening this thematic debate on one of the major concerns of humankind today. Last September, world leaders sent an unambiguous political message to delegations to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali, guiding them to ambitiously seek common ground to deal with the threats caused by global warming. The Bali Action Plan — with its four equally important building blocks, namely, mitigation, adaptation, technology and financing — must lead to a comprehensive global agreement in December 2009 in Copenhagen.

The difference in views on approaches to the threat of worldwide climate disturbances is understandable. It reflects gaps in social conditions and industrial development between the wealthiest and the poorest nations. The most vulnerable, including small island developing States and least developed countries, which will be the hardest hit, are the least responsible for causing climate change. We must accept the fact that securing a safe future for humankind is the common responsibility of all nations. It is obvious that the economic costs of doing so must be shared according to means.

It is important to note, as others have done, that the financing of climate change adaptation and investments in mitigation technologies cannot, and must not, in any way undermine development cooperation aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

We welcome the initiatives of groups of world leaders, such as the Group of Eight and the Major Economies Meeting on Energy Security and Climate Change. Their efforts are a valuable contribution towards a common binding United Nations agreement. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the only viable forum, for both reaching and enforcing worldwide consensus on actions to address climate change in a comprehensive way. The General Assembly, however, is an appropriate forum for giving political guidance, as this thematic debate should demonstrate.

The role of United Nations institutions in supporting and financing necessary action is vital. The World Bank and the International Finance Corporation are instrumental in bringing about and supporting partnership actions worldwide, and are helpful in designing and implementing innovative financing mechanisms.

The transfer of technology is one of the crucial elements in addressing climate change. Governments should facilitate investments by the private sector in new clean energy technology in developing countries and countries in transition, especially by enacting legislation providing security of investments and by avoiding burdening new technologies with undue taxation. By encouraging the private sector to invest in clean energy technologies in developing countries, a whole new world of opportunities for future technological innovation may be opened up. It is estimated that by the year 2030 up to $7 trillion dollars worth of clean energy investments may have been made, paving the way for a carbon-neutral future. It is unquestionably the role of the United Nations to ensure that this new industrial revolution does not bypass those countries where new investments and technological know-how are most needed.

Currently, over 80 per cent of all primary energy used in Iceland is renewable, which is the highest ratio of renewable energy use in the entire world. Iceland is proud to be at the forefront of developing the most advanced technology to harvest one of the cleanest and

safest renewable energy resources in the world: geothermal power is potentially accessible in some way in over 90 countries of the world. It is estimated that new geothermal power projects could increase installed capacity by 50 per cent or more in the next five years worldwide, as the number of countries with geothermal power operations will double to over 40.

For almost 30 years the Icelandic Government has operated and funded the United Nations Geothermal Training Programme, training hundreds of young professionals, both men and women, from 40 developing countries. These professionals have gone on to become instrumental in building geothermal energy projects in their home countries. This is one kind of technological transfer that we believe is helpful and which should be expanded in the years to come.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Socorro Rovirosa, head of the delegation of Mexico.

Ms. Rovirosa (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of Mexico welcomes the President's initiative to convene this meeting, which provides us an opportunity to underscore the importance of collective efforts to address climate change and its effects.

The findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are conclusive and sound. We have experienced increasingly severe meteorological events and tremendous suffering caused to entire peoples — something that Mexico has not been immune to. The adoption of the Bali Road Map last December was in itself a major achievement that demonstrated that, despite our differences, there is a belief that the international community should move ahead together under the leadership of the United Nations to develop mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and financing strategies to enable countries to effectively address climate change.

States have a fundamental responsibility in this area, but others also have a duty to act. Given their nature, partnerships involving the public and private sectors, national and international organizations, members of parliaments, governmental and non-governmental organizations, the scientific community, the media and civil society are crucial to the success of any policy.

Mexico attaches high priority to this issue. We are resolutely committed to adopting measures to combat climate change. In the interests of time, I shall refer only to some of the efforts we have made at the national level owing to our belief that inaction by some should not be an excuse to justify our own inaction.

We have stepped up our mitigation policies through our national climate change strategy. We are preparing a special programme, which includes a national study, in order to identify the economic implications of climate change and adaptation and mitigation measures. The goal is to ensure the resources necessary to implement our efforts. We also have in place a voluntary scheme of corporate emissions reporting, a first in the developing world. In 2007, we achieved our goal of planting 250 million trees in our country. That represents a quarter of the world's target. This year, we will plant an additional 280 million trees.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol are at the heart of Mexico's efforts at the international level. We were the first developing country to submit three national communications. We are now preparing the fourth, which will include updated emissions inventories.

Perhaps the greatest challenge we face is to be sufficiently creative, without departing from the principles and rationale of the Framework Convention, in finding new ways to respond to new scientific evidence and to address the clearly insufficient results achieved to date. In that endeavour, we must at all costs avoid creating a new North-South divide, with its walls of misunderstanding and mistrust.

One of the main problems in developing national policies is their high financial cost. Like many other countries, Mexico needs the support of international financial mechanisms that make it possible to develop technical and institutional capacities. Despite the fact that the transfer of technology and financing have been acknowledged to be key elements of any strategy to combat global warming, States in a position to help with such transfers have paid much less attention to the matter than is necessary.

Confronting climate change is economically and technologically viable. Clean technologies exist, and if the developing world had access to them, it would be able to make great strides in the areas of mitigation and adaptation. Access to technology is not, and should not

be, interpreted as lifting restrictions on intellectual property rights. That only serves to generate division on a subject of major importance. Mexico believes that addressing climate change entails joint creative work that recognizes the rights of those who develop technology while making it possible for developing countries to access, adapt and utilize that technology.

Access to sources of financing should make it possible for developing countries to participate further in efforts to combat climate change. We must develop new and innovative mechanisms that go beyond the traditional parameters of official development assistance. Mexico has called for the establishment of what it believes is a necessary multinational fund, with clear and inclusive formulas for contributions, to help overcome the fragmentation and inefficiency of existing funds. We note with interest that several other countries have also promoted the establishment of funds having different characteristics and similar goals. We express our willingness to work with them in order to expand access to financial resources for all States.

My Government is working on a proposal for the future fund that would make it possible to ensure the reliability of contributions to the fund while also ensuring that countries can benefit from its resources as they meet their national goals in accordance with their capabilities. In that regard, I should like to underscore the importance of the tenth special session of the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council and the Global Ministerial Environment Forum, which, among other things, will take up the issue of mobilizing resources to address the challenges posed by climate change.

Under the aegis of the Bali Action Plan, we will soon begin negotiations for a new climate regime, which should be balanced, fair, all-inclusive and in line with developing countries' need for growth. We believe that the regime should include sectoral options, intensity indicators and international cooperation mechanisms that provide incentives to complement, rather than replace, the national efforts of developing countries.

At the same time, the United Nations is also responsible for making progress in strengthening the international environmental governance system and for enhancing the efficiency and coherence of the systems responses to the challenges of protecting the environment. We support the process of informal General Assembly consultations on United Nations environmental activities and the prompt adoption of agreements on this matter.

Mexico is ready to work in a responsible and constructive way in the negotiations that lie ahead.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.